

The advance of the right wing was carried out in difficult climatic conditions: the frosts intensified (on the 20th of December, frosts reached 35 °), the snow cover increased, it was necessary to move mainly along the roads. The initial scope of the right wing operation, which was carried out with the expectation of encirclement and complete destruction of the enemy, was in fact somewhat limited. The tasks set by the commander of the Western Front to the armies of the right wing on December 18, 21 and 27, 1941, were not fully completed by the indicated date. With the release of our units to the line of the rivers Lama, Ruza, the offensive was delayed, since the enemy managed to organize a stubborn defense. In the future, it was necessary to organize a breakthrough of the fortified zone.

2. The counteroffensive of the armies of the right wing consisted of two successive stages: the first stage (from December 6 to 16) - going on the offensive, defeating the enemy and fighting for the capture of Klin, Solnechnogorsk, Istra reservoir and the city of Istra; the second stage (from December 17 to 25) - offensive battles west of Klin, Solnechnogorsk, Istra, continued pursuit of the enemy and reaching the line of the Lama and Ruza rivers.

The offensive operation of the right wing of the front developed in mainly in three business areas:

a) the 30th and 1st shock armies attacked Klin and further on Teryaeva Sloboda; b) the 20th Army advanced

in the general direction towards Solnechnogorsk, Volokolamsk; c) the 16th Army, developing a

strike on Istra and to the north, destroyed opposing German forces.

The task of the 30th Army was to inflict (in cooperation with the 1st Shock Army) a deep blow on the enemy's communications, cut the Leningrad highway and the escape routes of the Rogachev group of troops and defeat the Nazis in the direction of Klin, Teryaeva Sloboda. The task of the 1st shock army (in cooperation with the 30th army) was to defeat the enemy's Klin grouping and develop an offensive in a

westerly direction. The 20th Army was to destroy the Solnechnogorsk enemy group and, developing an offensive to the southwest, capture Volokolamsk. Task 16

army was to, in cooperation with the 20th and 5th armies (neighbor on the left), defeat the opposing enemy forces, capture the line of the Istra reservoir, the city of Istra and develop an offensive in a southwestern direction. 3. Winter conditions significantly affected

the course of operations on both sides. During the withdrawal, the German troops could not widely use their mobile units due to the large snow cover in the combat area. Some of the heavy tanks of the enemy overcame the snow cover, but they were also forced to cling to well-worn winter roads, and their combat operations proceeded in close cooperation with the infantry. The same should be said about our advancing tank units.

As for our rifle units, they could not move with the necessary speed, as they advanced on virgin snow. Therefore, the overall pace of the offensive has decreased. The deep snow cover undoubtedly affected the maneuvering of artillery (especially heavy), which was also one of the reasons for the slowdown in the advance of our troops. Our ski battalions, for the most part, almost did

not act as ski units due to their insufficient ski training; often they were used as ordinary rifle battalions.

In severe winter conditions, in the presence of deep snow cover, the enemy defending and retreating from line to line is capable, as battle experience has shown, relying on settlements, to deploy their fire weapons and use equipment (tanks along the roads) against the advancing in order to delay his advance and gain time to organize a solid defense on one of the rear lines. 4. The long period of the counteroffensive,

complicated by a number of circumstances, in severe winter conditions required great skill and continuity in command and control of troops on the part of the front command, armies and their headquarters. The number of formations (divisions and

brigades) in the armies ranged from 3 to 15; the most saturated in this respect was the 16th Army. So, on December 6, the combat strength of this army included five rifle, four cavalry divisions, four rifle,

four tank brigades - that is, a total of 17 formations. In addition, a large amount of artillery was attached to the 16th Army: three artillery regiments of the High Command reserve, two cannon artillery regiments, one high-capacity howitzer artillery regiment, seven anti-tank artillery regiments, and eight separate guards mortar battalions. Naturally, with such a number of formations that were part of the armies, a complex organization of control was required and a number of difficulties arose in work. Regardless of the number of formations that were part of one or another of the armies of the right wing, control during the retreat and during the offensive was a very complex and painstaking job. Thus, the emergence of new sectors of the front required the rapid adoption of new decisions. These decisions had to be immediately communicated to the troops, using all means of communication. Wired communications were disrupted, radios and communications officers on airplanes, cars, and motorcycles were used to transmit the combat order. In addition, management was carried out through personal communication, a detour of the troops and telegraph and telephone conversations with the command. It should be noted that, despite significant difficulties, the command and control of troops during the counteroffensive (especially at the command and headquarters of the Western Front) was at its best; This is evidenced by a number of data. During the period from December 6 to 25, the

commander of the Western Front issued several operational orders for all troops of the front and a number of private orders and instructions to the armies; in addition, the front headquarters gave orders on behalf of the command.

The commanders of the armies gave orders to the armies almost daily, usually setting the troops tasks for each day. 5.

In the course of the struggle on the western and northwestern approaches to Moscow, the most important role was played by large reserves, which were located at various distances from the front line and allowed the command to transfer them to the battlefield or to the deployment line in winter conditions in a fairly short time. The importance of operational-strategic reserves was especially evident during the deployment and commissioning of two new armies (1st shock and 20th) by order of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, which launched a counteroffensive at the moment the flank

the enemy's strike force to the Moscow-Volga canal and the growing crisis of the defensive battle on the northwestern approaches to Moscow. The reserves at the disposal of the armies,

as a rule, received tasks within the combat zone of their armies, where they sometimes found themselves pinned down by the enemy (30th and 16th armies). In front-line cases, additional forces were thrown in to achieve the desired result. such command

6. It should be noted the great importance of capturing the city of Klin and the defeat of the Klin-Rogachev grouping of the enemy for the overall successful development of the counteroffensive of the right wing of the front. The German grouping defending Klin had the task of holding this area for as long as possible in order to secure a road junction and escape routes to the west and southwest. The 30th and 1st shock armies delivered concentric blows to the enemy's Klin grouping from the north and east, which subsequently led to its encirclement.

As a result of the defeat of the enemy's Klin grouping, the troops of the 30th and 1st shock armies were able to continue developing the offensive. However, it must be pointed out that

the delay in the operation to capture the Klin region, the Istra reservoir, ultimately made it possible for the enemy to gain time and organize a stubborn defense at the turn of the Lama and Ruza rivers. One of the methods, not without success, used by the German command to delay

our offensive, was that a group of machine gunners in vehicles, having occupied a settlement or other convenient local object, fired and sometimes forced our units to deploy in battle formation, after which they retreated by car to the next convenient milestone.

7. The operational density of troops within the right wing was approximately as follows: the density of the troops of the Red Army - one division per 7 km; the density of enemy troops is one division per 10 km. Tactical density in different directions was different. The highest saturation density of equipment was in the 16th Army - 16-20 guns and 20-25 mortars per 1 km of the front.

The initial formation of the battle formations of the German troops during the attack on Moscow was carried out according to the usual formation scheme

wedges: tank units, submachine gunners on cars or motorcycles, anti-tank artillery, motorized infantry, divisional artillery, the main body of motorized infantry with tank guards, and finally, infantry moving in vehicles or on foot. But the gradual increase in the number of tanks, machine guns, anti-tank rifles and mortars from our side, as well as the bombing and assault actions of aviation (destroying enemy equipment) forced the Germans to change their tactics and use such battle formations more carefully. The battle formations of our troops in winter conditions were mainly ordinary battle formations of infantry units with attached tanks and artillery (reinforcements, anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns). Thus, in the process of the December offensive, the infantry, reinforced by modern technical means of combat, was the basis of battle

formations and conducted its operations according to the principles of combined arms combat. In addition, the actions of the infantry were combined with the actions of tank landings, consisting of machine gunners, and the anti-aircraft and anti-tank artillery attached to the latter, which gave our troops the opportunity to achieve the required maneuverability and in some areas caused panic in the ranks of the retreating enemy (especially during pursuit). The actions of tank landings during the offensive were especially successful at the junctions of enemy formations and on his open flanks. In winter conditions, a significant part of machine gunners (except for tank landings) and rifle subunits must be able to operate on skis. 8. The pace of the advance of the troops depended on a number of conditions. German troops during the November offensive, which was conducted in more favorable conditions (winter had not yet arrived, there was no significant snow cover), in the Volokolamsk-Klinsko-Dmitrovsky direction for 20 days traveled 80–100 km at an average movement rate of 4–5 km in day. Despite the fact that the German strike group consisted mainly of motorized formations (1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 10 and 11 tank, 14 and 36 motorized divisions), provided with artillery and aviation, the Germans did not were able to achieve a higher rate of progress. Our troops (30th and 16th armies) were

fierce winning battles and inflicted heavy losses on the enemy in manpower and equipment.

In the course of the struggle, the Red Army was supplied with powerful new fire weapons (anti-tank and anti-aircraft artillery, anti-tank rifles, mortars, and, finally, separate guards mortar divisions). This gave the command the opportunity to increase fire resistance to the fascist invaders. Our aviation, with its bombing and assault actions, held back the advance of enemy tanks and infantry and inflicted losses on them. At the same time, the troops of the Red Army began to be better applied to the terrain and dig in, thanks to which they became less vulnerable to the enemy; in addition, they learned to conduct a more stubborn defense. Therefore, the pace of advancement of the German tank units decreased. It should also be noted that the material part of the enemy by this time was significantly worn out. All this led to the fact that the calculations of the German command for the rapid actions of armored units in November - December 1941 did not materialize. The pace of the advance of the Red Army troops in December 1941 (despite the difficult conditions of a

harsh winter, the presence of a large snow cover) reached an average of 6 km per day (it should be taken into account that the bulk of the troops during the offensive was infantry); such rates should be considered quite satisfactory. The table below shows the pace of advance of the armies of the right wing of the Western Front in the period from 6 to 25 December 1941.

Армии	Средняя ширина фронта наступления (км)	Темпы продвижения по основному направлению (км)				
		6-10 декабря	11-15 декабря	16-20 декабря	21-25 декабря	Средний темп продвижения за время операции
30-я	Около 60	3,5	6,0	Перешла в состав Калининского фронта		
1-я ударная	Около 30	6,0	6,0	9,5	2,0	6,0
20-я	Около 25	Около 6,0	Около 6,0	10,5	—	5,5
16-я	Около 20	1,0	4,5	Около 12,0	2,0	5,0

The width of the front of the armies with their access to the railway line Moscow, Leningrad decreased:

a) for the 30th army - up to 30-32

km; b) for the 1st shock army - up to

14-15 km; c) for the 20th army - up to 14-15 km. Thus, the width of the front was almost halved, which made it possible to echelon the battle formations of the armies in depth.

The advance of the 1st shock, 20th and 16th armies by December 20-21 ended at the turn of the rivers Lama, Ruza, where the units met the organized defense of the enemy. This circumstance explains such a low rate of advance during the offensive in the period of December 21-25.

9. During his withdrawal, the enemy used tanks in small groups - 5-10 tanks each (sometimes more) in close cooperation with the infantry. These small groups of tanks operated mainly along the roads; the enemy avoided entering the forests. In the process of hostilities, the Germans sought to strike shortly, after which the tanks took cover behind the infantry; in addition, the tanks operated from ambushes, from settlements and other shelters. As a rule, German tanks did not engage in open combat with our tanks, but usually left, trying to outflank them, or fired from behind cover.

As for our tank units, in the course of the counter-offensive of the right wing, tanks were more often attached to rifle, cavalry divisions and rifle brigades. For the most part, tanks were used in small groups (as infantry support tanks) in close cooperation with rifle units.

However, it should be noted that the issues of interaction with infantry and artillery have not yet been worked out sufficiently. This is confirmed by a number of examples from military operations. Assistance to tanks in battle, their support by infantry, artillery and aircraft was often insufficient. During the offensive, tanks were not given escort guns to suppress the enemy's anti-tank defenses, or were given in insufficient numbers.

Accompanying advancing tanks with artillery fire was also insufficiently practiced, as a result of which almost the entire anti-tank defense of the enemy remained untouched. The interaction of tanks with aircraft during the counteroffensive of the right wing failed. Aviation, acting on the troops and rear of the enemy, carried out the tasks indicated to it by the front command. But where the combined arms command gave the tankers time to prepare for the

offensive and properly organized interaction with the infantry, artillery and aviation, the tank units provided great assistance to the infantry in battle and suffered minor losses in materiel.

In winter conditions, the offensive was carried out by small groups of tanks, in short order, and the tanks, breaking into the enemy's position, inflicted serious losses on him; in the future, they were located in ambushes and flank fire from the spot cleared the way for the advancing infantry. According to the

headquarters of the Western Front, the total losses in material parts of tanks for the period December - January were as follows (in%):

From anti-tank and medium-caliber artillery fire 65 From heavy machine guns 5 Undermined in enemy minefields 10 From aviation 0[73] From enemy tanks 35

Due to technical malfunction

5

Total 100

Thus, the tanks suffered the greatest losses from enemy artillery fire.

Battle experience has shown that our tank formations and units have every opportunity to conduct active, successful operations against German troops, provided they interact with infantry, aviation and provide tanks with artillery support during the offensive.

10. The armies of the right wing of the front on December 6 had nine cavalry divisions, that is, about 25% of the total number of formations. The enemy did not have large cavalry formations. Superiority in cavalry allowed the command of the armies in certain directions to develop its active combat activity and achieve significant success. The presence of forest spaces favored the actions of the cavalry, as

it provided its shelter from the effects of enemy aircraft and tanks. The cavalry made extensive use of the forests; its combat work during the period of the counteroffensive confirms the possibility of using large cavalry masses in a favorable operational situation, even in areas saturated with enemy troops. The practice of joint operations of the cavalry with the infantry has shown that the reinforcement of the cavalry corps (division) with one or two tank brigades and a rifle division (in vehicles) makes it possible to deploy active operations on the flanks and behind enemy lines.

11. In the course of the counter-offensive of the armies of the right wing of the front, the question arose of capturing the settlements turned by the Germans into strongholds or centers of resistance. Climatic and tactical conditions forced the German command to hold on to settlements and use engineering means to bring these points into a defensive state. This was done in order to hold back the onslaught of our advancing units. A typical example is the fortification and defense by the Germans of Kryukov, Krasnaya Polyana, Klin - the houses in these settlements were turned into a bunker or bunker, in addition, a thorough defense of the streets of these cities and towns was organized. Therefore, the commander of the Western Front energetically and persistently demanded that the troops move forward rapidly to cover the enemy's flank groupings and forbade frontal battles with

covering units, as well as frontal attacks on fortified enemy defense units. 12. Saturation of the

armies of the right wing with artillery during the period offensive was as follows:

Армии	Артиллерийские части
30-я	108-й и 542-й пушечные артиллерийские полки. 540-й артиллерийский противотанковый полк. 29-й и 30-й отдельные гвардейские минометные дивизионы
1-я ударная	701-й артиллерийский полк резерва Главного командования
20-я	517-й артиллерийский полк резерва Главного командования
16-я	2-й гвардейский, 39-й и 138-й артиллерийские полки резерва Главного командования, 523-й и 528-й пушечный артиллерийский, 544-й гаубичный артиллерийский полки большой мощности, 1-й и 2-й гвардейские, 533-й, 610-й, 768-й, 863-й артиллерийские противотанковые полки, 13-й, 17-й, 28-й, 30-й, 31-й, 35-й, 37-й и 26-й отдельные гвардейские минометные дивизионы, 871-й артиллерийский противотанковый полк

The number of guns at the beginning of December was expressed in the following figures:

	Полевых	Противотанковых
30-я армия	190	70
1-я ударная армия	145	35
20-я армия	130	65
16-я армия	320	190
Итого	785	360

The greatest density of saturation with artillery was at the front of the 16th Army. The large saturation of the 16th Army with artillery was due to the presence of the largest tank grouping (4th Panzer Group) of the enemy in front of the army front and the fact that the 16th Army directly provided for the near approaches to the capital. When the army went on the offensive on December 7, the enemy, who initially offered considerable resistance, under the strong influence of artillery and the onslaught of our units, began to withdraw in a westerly direction.

The actions of the artillery of the 16th Army (which are the most instructive) can be divided into three periods. **The**

first period - the battles for mastering the Klushino, Kryukovo, Snegiri, Rozhdestveno borders (from December 6 to 9); in accordance with the initial tasks of the offensive, the artillery was regrouped to achieve a sufficient density of fire in the sectors of the advancing divisions, with the greatest density created in the center and on the left flank. Separate Guards mortar battalions were of great importance in delivering a blow to the enemy before his withdrawal. Their number in the sector of the 16th Army in the most critical periods reached 10. Mortar battalions with their fire inflicted heavy losses on the enemy in manpower and equipment, in some cases causing panic and confusion. Proper effectiveness was achieved in cases where the enemy was not in cover. **The second period** - the battles to the east of the Istra reservoir and for the mastery of this area

(from December 10 to 15). With the beginning of the advance, the artillery was regrouped, taking into account the tasks and the presence of thrust in the reinforcement regiments. In winter conditions, this artillery and guards mortar battalions lagged behind the advanced rifle units; the main difficulty in advancing was the enemy's mining of roads and the creation of traffic jams (with a lack of equipped detours). The fighting was reduced to supporting the fighting of the units for the capture of the reservoir. **The third period** is from the moment the enemy is pursued to the line of the

Ruza River and until reaching this line (from December 15 to 25). The hasty retreat of the enemy obliged our troops to pursue him at an accelerated pace. Divisional artillery lagged behind infantry in winter conditions. Artillery combat operations consisted in supporting units advancing on fortified settlements and frontiers.

If in the 16th Army during the offensive the battle formations were significantly saturated with artillery, then this cannot be said about the rest of the armies of the right wing. The enemy's defense consisted of a number of nodes of resistance dissected along the front and in depth, which, as a rule, were combined with settlements or command heights. Winter conditions limited the combat operations of aviation and tanks; artillery and mortars were

the main means of suppressing enemy defenses. The enemy adapted to the defense not only the settlement as a whole, but also individual buildings for stubborn defense. The statutory methods of artillery support did not always lead to the desired results. Therefore, it was necessary to move from artillery preparation to an "artillery offensive", i.e., to continuous support of the infantry offensive by artillery (fire and wheels) until the enemy's defenses were broken to the full depth. 13. As can be seen from all of the above, the period of hostilities of the parties on the outskirts

of Moscow in late November and early December was full of a struggle for the initiative, alternating defensive and offensive battles. In some cases, they took on the character of oncoming battles. The largest oncoming clash of the two operational groupings in peculiar conditions was the battles of the 1st shock and 20th armies on the Dmitrov, Yakhroma, Krasnaya Polyana line with the Nazi troops trying to break through.

3rd Panzer Group and units of the 4th Panzer Group (1st, 2nd, 6th and 7th Panzer, 14th Motorized, 106th Infantry Divisions) at the end of November 1941, with the retreating troops of the 30th and The 16th Army, with access to the Moscow-Volga Canal line (the Dmitrov, Yakhroma, Krasnaya Polyana region), unexpectedly met with a serious rebuff from the new reserve armies (1st shock and 20th). The enemy sought to force the Moscow-Volga Canal in the area of Dmitrov, Yakhroma and cross over to the eastern bank to cover the capital from the northeast.

An attempt by the enemy to cross on November 29 in the Dmitrov area was eliminated by a counterattack by units of the 1st Shock Army; the attempt by the Germans (7th Panzer and 14th Motorized Divisions) to cross the canal in the Yakhroma region on November 28 was initially successful. Having pressed the units of the 29th Infantry Brigade, the enemy captured Peremilovo, B. Semeshki, but the counterattack of the units of the 1st Shock Army was driven back to the western coast with heavy losses for him.

In the area of Bely Rast, Krasnaya Polyana, the German offensive met the active actions of the troops of the 20th Army, which went on a counteroffensive on December 3 with the right wing and center (64th

rifle brigade, 331st rifle division, 28th rifle and 24th tank brigades). In battles on the near approaches to the capital, having no superiority in forces to develop success, the enemy had to switch from offensive to defensive at first in separate sectors, and then on the entire front. In the following days, the initiative of action passed entirely into the hands of the 1st shock and 20th armies, and they began to push the enemy, who was forced to retreat, having suffered defeat. Thus, it can be said with certain

justification that the combat operations of both sides on the front of the 1st Shock and 20th Armies from November 29 to December 4 had the character of a kind of oncoming battle. Subsequently, it turned into operational defense and withdrawal for the Germans, into an offensive battle and pursuit for the troops of the right wing of the Western Front.

Chapter Three

Position in the center. Attempts by our troops to break through the defensive line of the Germans on the rivers Ruza, Moscow, Nara

While defensive battles continued on the Nara River, a message from the Soviet Information Bureau was transmitted on the radio that ***“On December 6, 1941, the troops of our Western Front, having exhausted the enemy in previous battles, launched a counteroffensive against his strike flank groups. As a result of the launched offensive, both of these groups were defeated and hastily retreated, abandoning their equipment, weapons***

and suffering huge losses. On the right flank of the 5th Army, by the end of December 11, the situation was as follows. As a result of the counteroffensive of the 108th, 144th, 19th and 329th rifle divisions, the defense front of the enemy's 252nd, 87th, 78th and 267th infantry divisions was broken through; our units, breaking the resistance of the enemy, reached the area of Lokotnya, Kolyubakovo by the end of the indicated number. The enemy by this time was exhausted and in the center of the Western Front - on the Nara River. After the defeat suffered near Yushkov and Mogutov, he no longer took active actions here, but went on the defensive and began to dig in

the ground intensively, erecting a strong defensive line in the occupied territory. On the central sector of the Western Front, our armies did not have superiority in military equipment. But the situation that had developed by mid-December 1941 near Moscow was such that it became increasingly difficult for the Germans to hold their center along the line of a roll back.

The morale of the German troops declined; the commanders of the units tried in vain to raise it with references to previous victories. The soldiers suffered greatly from the cold; their food was badly supplied; in the trenches abandoned by the Germans, they found notes: “Farewell, Moscow”, “We will not see Germany again”, “Down with Hitler!” etc. However, as the experience of subsequent battles showed, the Germans nevertheless offered stubborn resistance to our offensive.

At the same time, the morale of the Soviet troops, in view of the definite victories of the Red Army, was high; this factor in the situation of unfolding events was of great importance in defeating the enemy in the Moscow operation.

Instructions from the command of the Western Front on the transition to counteroffensive

In connection with the current situation, on December 13, 1941, the command of the Western Front issued instructions to the armies of the central sector (5th, 33rd and 43rd) to go on the

counteroffensive. The idea of the front command was to tie down the enemy forces in the center with the blow of our armies, not to allow them to maneuver towards the flanks; in the future, the possibility of a split of the fascist front against Moscow into two unrelated parts was not ruled out.

Directives of the front command No. 0103 and 0104 / op to the armies
The center was tasked with:

The 5th Army, which, in cooperation with the 16th Army, pursued the retreating enemy with its right flank, by the end of December 18, reach the front of Vasyukovo, Klementyevo, Oblyanishchevo, Gribtsovo, Maurino, reaching on December 16 the main forces of the line: Safonikha, Ozernaya River, Tabolovo, Ruza, Tuchkovo. The dividing line on the left to Maurino is the same, then Novo-Nikolskoye, Koloch station.

Directive 0104/op stated:

“33 and 43 armies, to strike in the direction of Ateptsevo, Balabanovo, Maloyaroslavets. By the end of December 18, the armies: reach the line: Tashirovo, Mishukovo, Balabanovo, Tarutino, Komarovo,

Black Dirt ... a) Commander 33 with a grouping of at least four divisions with reinforcements from the starting position excl. Naro Fominsk, Kamenskoye, at dawn on December 17, strike in the direction of Balabanovo, Maloyaroslavets, defeat the enemy and reach the Tashirovo, Mishukovo, Balabanovo line

by the end of December 18. The boundary line on the left is Dyatlovo,

Balabanovo, Uvarovskoye, Stupino. b) Commander 43, by regrouping the forces of the army, create a grouping on the right flank and, at d

in cooperation with the 33rd army, a strike in the direction of Romanovo, Balabanovo and by the end of 18.12 reach the line of excl.

Balabanovo, Sparrows. Demarcation line on the left: Burinovo, Maloyaroslave

All armies were told: 1. For the timely exit to the indicated lines, personal army commanders are responsible.

2. The offensive of the armies will be supported by the military air forces of the front. 3. Pursue swiftly, do not break away from the enemy, widely using strong mobile forward detachments to capture road junctions, gorges and disorganize enemy marching and combat formations.

Frontal attacks on fortified enemy resistance centers were strictly prohibited; the leading echelons were asked to bypass such points, placing their destruction on the second and subsequent echelons.

Emphasis was placed on the need for clear communication with neighbors and helping each other. In this case it was suggested

“seek to surround and destroy the enemy, not making excuses formally by drawing demarcation lines.

Fulfillment by the armies of the order of the front

commander 5th Army At the time of receiving the order of the front commander in 1st Army, the combat events unfolded as follows.

The right flank of the army, together with units of the left wing of the 16th Army, carried out offensive operations against the Nazi troops, who at that time were retreating under the blows of the Red Army in a westerly direction. Holding firmly in its center and on the left flank, the army advanced its right wing farther and farther to the west, throwing back the rearguard units of the enemy, capturing the territory and trophies occupied by him. The enemy put up stubborn resistance, trying by all means to delay our advance on pre-prepared defensive lines.

In order to disrupt the enemy's defense system, cause disorder in the planned withdrawal of his troops and disorganize

the rear of the Nazi units, by order of the front command, the 2nd Guards Cavalry Corps of General Dovator was included in the 5th Army.[74] The corps was entrusted with the task of conducting combat operations behind enemy lines.

On December 10, the corps (3rd and 4th Guards Cavalry Divisions with the attached 20th Cavalry Division and the 1st Separate Cavalry Regiment) concentrated in the forests north of Kubinka in readiness to complete the task assigned to it.

On December 13, after a series of short blows inflicted on the enemy's strongholds, the right-flank divisions and divisions of the center of the 5th Army (108th, 144th, 19th, 329th, 336th and 50th) again went on the offensive. The enemy offered stubborn resistance along the entire front of the advancing units. Intense battles flared up, which, due to the presence of strong enemy defenses and the saturation of his units with fire weapons, began to take on a protracted character. It turned out to be extremely difficult to knock the enemy down from the defensive line he had occupied; it required a lot of effort and could cause unnecessary casualties.

Under these conditions, the commander of the 5th Army used the 2nd Guards Cavalry Corps. On December 13, at the junction of the 19th and 329th rifle divisions, he crossed the front of our units and through a dense forest area, without paths, overcoming deep snow cover and enemy resistance, began to move across the territory, occupied by the —

Germans.[75] It seemed unlikely that the cavalry could advance successfully under such conditions. Nevertheless, on the first day, the corps covered a distance of 15 km with advanced units and went to the Spasskaya, Lokotnya front, having a second echelon of its troops at the turn of the Moscow River. The most difficult stage of the path was passed; this opened up the prospect of successful operations by the 2nd Cavalry Corps and the right-flank divisions of the army, which, taking advantage of the confusion of the enemy, went to the front: Davydovskoye (15 km north of Zvenigorod), Surmino, Novo-Aleksandrovskoye,

Spasskaya, Lokotnya, Kolyubakovo, Kryukovo. At this time, units of the 82nd motorized rifle and 32nd rifle divisions of the left flank of the army were still occupying a defensive line along the line of Krutitsa, Asakovo, Dyutkovo, M

was an arc, tilted in the right part to the east. The center of the arc was aimed to the northwest, while by order of the front commander, the army as a whole was to turn towards west.

In view of this, the commander of the 5th Army decided to align the front along the left flank and then attack with the whole army in a westerly direction.

The decision of the army commander was set out in two orders: No. 023 of December 15 and No. 024 of December 17. The first one stated:

***"1. The enemy continues to resist
is thrown back by our units to the north, northwest and west.***

***2. The shock group consisting of the 19th, 329th and 336th rifle
divisions continues to develop the offensive, turning the main forces
from the line of Terekhovo, Velkino, Gorbovo, Lyzlovo to the west in the direction of***

The turn of the right-flank divisions of the army to the west was facilitated by the successful actions of the cavalry group of General Dovator in the rear of the enemy. At 03:00 on December 14, this group advanced to the Terekhovo area, where it captured enemy artillery and mortar batteries. By the end of that day, the group was fighting in the area north of Terekhov, moving in the direction of Lake Trostenskoye. She intercepted the paths along which the fascist troops retreated, and brought panic to their rear. Taking advantage of this, the right flank of the 5th Army successfully moved forward, pushing back and destroying the opposing German units.

By December 17, the Dovator cavalry group reached the area of Lake Trostenskoye, destroying the enemy units encountered along the way and capturing trophies: 50 guns, 17 heavy machine guns, 45 light machine guns, 136 machine guns, a large number of rifles and ammunition, 204 trucks and 46 cars, 30 motorcycles and many other property. The successful actions of the group facilitated the advance of the right flank of the army and its exit to the line of Onufriev, Zagorye, Vishenki, Vorontsovo, Khrushchevo. The

front of the right flank of the army was ahead of the left flank divisions - the 82nd and 32nd. In view of this, the commander of the 5th Army was

an order was given to the army (No. 024 of December 17) on the development of the offensive. It said:

"1. Destroying the enemy grouping in the Ruz-Zvenigorod direction, parts of the shock group of the army approach the city of Ruza. The enemy, putting up stubborn resistance, withdraws his units to the west.

2. The 5th army, regrouping its forces and continuing the continuous pursuit of the retreating enemy on its right flank, simultaneously goes on the offensive on its left flank.

In accordance with the tasks assigned to individual divisions, the army was supposed to reach the Mal front by the end of December 18. Ivantsevo, Gorki, Vatulino, Kozhino, Eskino, Lyakhovo, Yakshino, Kryukovo are ready to reach the line indicated by the order of the front commander (Vasyukovo, Klementyevo, Oblyanishchevo, Gribtsovo, Maurino) with the next throw.

The mobile tank group (the 20th tank brigade with the 136th separate tank battalion) was tasked on December 18 to strike in the direction of Ruza, Klementyevo and occupy the Klementyevo area by the end of the day. In the order for the

army (as well as in the order for the front), frontal attacks were forbidden, swiftness was required, and the need to pursue the enemy and interact with the order of the army commander, the neighbors was noted. Fulfilling right-flank units of the 5th Army

continued to pursue the enemy, who provided more and more. more and more increasing opposition as our units approached the Ozeraya and Ruza rivers, on which the enemy had set up a strong defensive line. The city of Ruza was turned into a major stronghold by him (Scheme 10).

On December 20, the 19th and 329th Rifle Divisions crossed the Ruza River and captured Komlev, Gorki, and Sytkovo. The 336th Rifle Division with the 20th Tank Brigade and the 136th Separate Tank Battalion, interacting with the 108th Rifle Division, broke into the city of Ruza and started street fighting there, destroying enemy submachine gunners and repelling their counterattacks.

On the same day, the 50th Rifle Division and the 60th Rifle Brigade, advancing along the southern bank of the Moskva River, captured Krasotin, Kozhin, the village of them. Kaganovich. The 82nd motorized rifle and 32nd rifle divisions, having broken through the enemy defenses and overturned him on their way, reached the line of Krymskoye, Boldino, Maurino.

On this day, the 2nd Guards Cavalry Corps, having defeated the enemy in the area of the villages of Novaya and Lyzlovo, advanced towards the right flank of the army. On the way to Zakhryapin, the group met large enemy forces. A fierce battle ensued, in which during the reconnaissance, the commander of the 2nd Guards Cavalry Corps, Hero of the Soviet Union, Major General Dovator was killed.[76] —

The loss of an outstanding commander of the cavalry group was very difficult for her. The group of General Dovator did a great job, contributing to the successful offensive of the right flank of the 5th Army with their bold actions. Acting behind enemy lines in winter and off-road conditions, she showed an example of the combat use of cavalry.

In the future, the group continued its operations behind enemy lines and was soon transferred to the 16th Army, where its combat use, according to the general situation, was at that time more appropriate. At the front of the 5th Army,

meanwhile, the following was happening. On December 21, the 108th Rifle Division with the 37th Rifle and 22nd Tank Brigades crossed the Ruza River; in the afternoon, these units fought at the line of Palashkino, Mal. Ivantsevo. Having reached the western bank of the Ruza,

the 5th Army achieved major success in pursuing the retreating enemy. But the fifteen-day pursuit with battles, in deep snow, in great frosts, weakened the forces of the right-flank units of the army; losses in personnel and equipment were great. The divisions, having reached the western bank of the Ruza, met the enemy's fortified line here. On December 21, the Germans launched strong counterattacks along the

western bank of the Ruza. They forced the 108th division, 37th rifle, 22nd tank brigades, 19th rifle division, 18th rifle brigade to withdraw to the eastern bank of Ruza, and the 50th rifle division and 60th rifle brigade to the northern coast rivers of Moscow. The battles in the city of Ruza were also unsuccessful, and the 336th Rifle Division with the 20th

the tank brigade and the 136th separate tank battalion were forced to leave the city and move east of it to put themselves in order. The offensive of the 82nd motorized rifle and 32nd rifle divisions was also suspended, parts of which returned to their original position. The offensive of the army was unsuccessful. Until it was replenished

with personnel and weapons, until the units were put in order, there was no point in resuming the offensive. This could bleed the army and disable it for a long time. The army commander decided to suspend the offensive for a while. The right-flank units of the army entrenched themselves on the eastern bank of the Ruza River and on

the northern bank of the Moscow River. The left flank remained in its former positions.

33rd Army

By order of the front commander, the 33rd Army was assigned the task of breaking through the enemy front in the Naro-Fominsk (excl.), Kamenskoye sector with the main blow in the direction of Balabanovo, Maloyaroslavets, having four rifle divisions in the strike group.

Units of the enemy's 3rd Motorized, 183rd Infantry, 20th Tank and partially 15th Infantry Divisions defended themselves in front of the front of the planned breakthrough. The defensive line of the Germans was equipped for about two months. It had a line of strongholds with full profile trenches, dugouts and communications. In some areas, groups of points were nodes of resistance. As anti-personnel obstacles, barbed wire (in a throw or in the form of a fence)

and tension or pressure mines were used. Widely used anti-tank obstacles, mainly mines. Strongholds and centers of resistance had, as a rule, a well-organized system of mortar and machine-gun fire. As strongholds, the Germans used settlements, the

gaps between which were filled with snow trenches, ramparts and were usually shot through by flanking machine gun fire and

mortars.

The commander of the 33rd Army solved the task assigned to him as follows:

a) in the first echelon, he placed in the shock group - the 1st Guards Motorized Rifle Division, 110, 338 and 113th Rifle Divisions, in the holding down - the 222nd Rifle Division; the front of the shock group reached 16 km; fettering front - 14 km; b) in the second echelon - the

201st rifle division (behind the right flank of the strike group). The balance of forces and means on the

breakthrough front was as follows:

Состав войск	Всего			На 1 км фронта				
	бойцов	орудий	минометов	танков	бойцов	орудий	минометов	танков
У нас								
1-я гвардейская мотострелковая дивизия 110-я стрелковая дивизия 338-я стрелковая дивизия 113-я стрелковая дивизия 201-я стрелковая дивизия	Около 22000	120	60	50	1375	7,5	3,7	3
У противника								
6-я моторизован- ная дивизия 183-я пехотная дивизия 20-я танковая дивизия 15-я пехотная дивизия (частично)	Около 17000	Около 70	Около 120	30- 40	1063	4,3	7,5	2

Notes: 1. Parts of the enemy, according to our intelligence, had approximately **1/2–1/3** of their staff.

2. Our units, starting to solve the problem of a breakthrough, were significantly understaffed after the fighting on the Nara River.

The order of the commander of the 33rd Army for the offensive indicated:

“33 A (222 sd, 1 gmsd, 110, 338, 201, 113 sd) at dawn on 12/18/41, in cooperation with 43 A, strikes in the direction of Balabanovo, Maloyaroslavets with the task of defeating the opposing enemy and by the end of the day reach boundary of Tashirovo, Mishukov, Balabanovo.

Then followed the tasks of the shock and fettering groups and instructions on the combat support of the advancing troops.

“To the chief of the ABT of the army troops,” paragraph 10 said, ***“ out of the total number of tanks available, allocate 10 tanks to each division (except for the 222nd rifle division) for action together with the infantry.”***

Item 11: ***“Artillery. Readiness 23:00 17.12. Zeroing 30 m; artillery preparation from 8:30 to 9:30. Attack starts at 9:30. Tasks; 1. Suppression of nodes of resistance in the areas of Kotovo, Elagino, Ateptsevo, Sliznevo, Chichkovo. 2. Suppression of enemy artillery in the areas of Aleshkovo, Kotovo, Christmas, Pavlovka.***

Fulfilling the order of the army commander, units of the 33rd Army, on the morning of December 18, after an hour of artillery preparation, went on the

offensive. The 1st Guards Motorized Rifle and 113th Rifle Divisions managed to cross the Nara River. The 1st Guards Motorized Rifle Division captured the barracks, which is 2 km southwest of Naro-Fominsk; The 113th Rifle Division fought in the forest, bypassing Chichkovo from the northwest. The 338th Rifle Division at that time captured Sliznev on the east bank of the Nara. These were the results of the first day of the offensive. The enemy offered stubborn resistance and did not allow the advancing units to develop their success. On the first day of the offensive, the 110th Rifle Division could not advance at all. On December 19,

there were no significant changes in the situation of the units of the 33rd Army. On the night of December 19, the 110th Infantry Division crossed the Nara and captured Yelagin on the move. A heated battle ensued with the enemy, who began to draw up reserves. As a result of a counterattack by superior forces of the 110th Infantry

divisions left Elagino and by the morning of December 19 returned to their initial position.

Having identified the most important strongholds of the enemy - the 75 km junction, Elagino, Ateptsevo and Chichkovo - units of the 33rd Army tried to advance further, bypassing these points. Until the end of December 20, despite the introduction of the reserve 201st Rifle Division into battle, the offensive developed poorly, and the units remained in the same places from which they began the offensive.

The task set by the front command was not completed. The difficulties that stood in the way of the offensive nullified the efforts of the army.

43rd Army

The 43rd Army, which interacted with the 33rd Army, on the orders of the front commander, was to strike in the direction of Romanovo, Balabanovo and, by the end of December 18, reach the line of Balabanovo (excl.), Sparrows. In front of the

breakthrough front, units of the 15th Infantry (partially), the 19th Tank and 34th Infantry Divisions of the enemy defended themselves. The defense here was of the same character as before the 33rd Army.

The neighbor on the right (33rd Army) was solving a problem similar to that of the 43rd Army. The neighbor on the left (49th Army) broke through the enemy front in the direction of

Kuzmishchevo, Vysokinichi. The commander of the 43rd Army solved the task of breaking through

the enemy defenses in the following way. a) First echelon: strike group - 93rd rifle division, 5th airborne corps, 26th tank brigade; the fettering group - the 53rd and 17th rifle divisions. The front of the shock group - 10 km, the front of the holding group - 22 km; b) the

second echelon (298th machine-gun battalion) - behind the left flank of the strike group.

The balance of forces and means on the breakthrough front was as follows:

Состав войск	Всего			На 1 км фронта				
	бойцов	орудий	минометов	танков	бойцов	орудий	минометов	танков
У нас								
5-й воздушно-десантный корпус 93-я стрелковая дивизия 26-я танковая бригада	Около 15000	111	127	50	1500	11	13	5
У противника								
15-я пехотная дивизия (частично) 19-я танковая дивизия 34-я пехотная дивизия (частично)	Около 9000	50	100	50	900	5	10	5

Note. The available composition of the enemy troops and our units was about the same as on the front of the 33rd Army.

The task assigned to the army units in the order of the commander of the 43rd Army No. 41 / op dated December 15, 1941, was formulated as follows:

“43 A, continuing to defend the previously occupied line with part of its forces, goes on the offensive at dawn on December 18, with the goal, in cooperation with 33 A, to defeat the opposing enemy units, delivering the main blow with its right flank: from the front excl. Kamenskoye, ford 1 km west. Inino in the general direction to Romanovo, Balabanovo, and by the end of December 18, it reaches the Balabanovo front, elev. 181.0 on the highway Balabanovo, S

The order for the offensive of the 43rd Army, as well as the order of the front commander, contains: a prohibition to carry out frontal attacks on the enemy's fortified centers of resistance, an instruction to pursue the enemy swiftly, preventing the separation of his retreating units, a requirement to clearly interact with a neighbor and observe the surprise of the offensive.

At dawn on December 18, the 43rd Army, after an hour of artillery preparation, went on the offensive. The 93rd Rifle Division, having crossed the Nara River and overcoming enemy fire resistance, by the end of the day reached the eastern edge of the forest, southwest of Melnikov, captured Hill 208.3, blocking Romanovo. The 5th Airborne Corps, suffering heavy losses from enemy mortar and machine-gun fire, captured Hill 189.2 and Nikolsky Dvors by the end of the day. At this time, the 26th tank brigade concentrated in Sergovka, in readiness to build on the success of the shock group. The 53rd and 17th rifle divisions defended the line of Inino, Stremilovo, Kormashevka. On the night of December 19, the 93rd Rifle Division and the 5th Airborne Corps

were subjected to fierce counterattacks from the enemy. The 93rd Rifle Division repulsed the attacks, the 5th Airborne Corps was forced to leave the Nikolskiye Dvory and retreat to the Nara River. December 19 did not bring success to the army. The units put themselves in order after unsuccessful battles

and prepared to continue the offensive from the morning of December 20.

On December 20, the 93rd Rifle Division launched an attack on Romanovo, and the 5th Airborne Corps on Nikolskiye Dvory. The battles for these points took on a protracted character, and the advance of the advancing units stopped. The tasks facing the army were not fulfilled - just like the tasks assigned to the neighbor on the right. The 43rd Army was unable to break the enemy on the line of his main resistance.

Reasons for the failure of the offensive actions of the armies of the central sector of the Western Front In

all three armies of the central sector, the offensive was not developed; the troops of the armies did not achieve their goals and were partly forced to return to their original position.

One of the reasons for the failure was that the advancing units did not had a decisive superiority in forces in their offensive zones.

The enemy stubbornly resisted. Success in this case could be achieved under the condition of skillful and decisive actions of the troops.

Just in relation to the actions of the troops, the command of the Western Front noted a number of significant shortcomings that lowered the results of combat work. These shortcomings were mainly in the command and control of

troops in battle. Agreeing with the statements of the army commanders about the great difficulties of the offensive (in winter, without roads, in deep snow, in severe frosts and in areas mined and blocked), the front command nevertheless saw the main reason for the failure of the offensive not in this, but in the unsatisfactory command and control of troops. The directive of the front No. 0120 / op of December 23 and the order of the front commander No. 0137 / op of January 1, 1942 indicated that the headquarters were located far from the troops and did not have constant and reliable communication with them, as a result of which the management lags

behind the development of the situation and management is late. Commanders of formations often do not conduct reconnaissance on the main directions of the offensive with subordinate regimental commanders - as a result, some battalion and even regimental commanders do not know where artillery observation posts of supporting artillery are located, and commanders of artillery battalions do not know the tasks of rifle battalions and regiments. As a rule, it was stated in the order along the front, the commanders of rifle battalions and regiments did not know which tanks were attached to them or which tanks were operating in their offensive zone. Tasks for tanks are set vaguely, hastily. Tank attacks are not supported by our artillery fire. The work of artillery in an offensive is limited to artillery preparation, after which both tanks and infantry are left to fend for themselves and suffer heavy losses. In the offensive, despite direct orders, frontal attacks took place, leading to heavy losses.

The front commander proposed to eliminate the listed shortcomings. The troops and command had to revise their methods of work and, on the basis of the reconnaissance of the enemy, prepare for new offensive operations. In the 5th Army, which had the largest number of losses, it took longer, in the 33rd and 43rd - less. The resumption of the offensive in the last two armies coincided with the transition of the flank armies of the Western Front to the general offensive.

Arrangement of

the rear Front Directive No. 027 of December 22, 1941 indicated: to deploy field army depots of the armies of the central sector of the Western Front at the following points: 5th Army -

Kuntsevo, Golitsino; branch - Dorohovo; delivery route - Mozhayskoe highway; 33rd Army -

Vnukovo, Krekshino; branch - Bekasovo; path delivery - Naro-Fominsk highway;

43rd Army - Podolsk, Domodedovo; department - Kamenka; path delivery - Warsaw highway.

The main railway directions for delivery during the offensive: 5th Army - Moscow,

Kubinka; 33rd and 43rd armies

- Moscow, Naro-Fominsk. Highways and dirt roads: 5th Army - Moscow,

Kubinka; 33rd Army - Moscow,

Naro-Fominsk; 43rd Army - Moscow,

Podolsk, Maloyaroslavets. Thus, the existing

network of railways and highways in the zone of operations of the armies of the central sector of the Western Front made it possible to carry out the normal delivery and movement of bases forward, before the troops reached the Gzhatsk-Yukhnov line.

On December 15, by the time the armies of the central section of the Western Front went on the offensive, the following stocks were in their bases: ammunition - 1.5-2 ammunition; fuel - 2 refueling; food - 6-7 dachas, fodder - about 4 dachas. There was a shortage of hay, which was almost non-existent in the troops.

The

conclusions of the operation carried out by the armies of the central section of the Western Front in December 1941, despite their unsuccessful outcome, are instructive to a

certain extent. 1. They show that sometimes, according to the situation, it is necessary to attack without having a decisive superiority in forces. But such an offensive must be especially well organized. The commander of the Western Front in mid-December 1941 (according to the prevailing situation) had reason to order the armies of the central

section of the Western Front on the offensive, although by this time they did not have superiority in forces over the enemy.

2. An offensive against an organized defense, under all favorable circumstances, should not be carried out without appropriate reconnaissance of the enemy and preliminary reconnaissance of the direction of the main attack. This is especially true for an attack on a fortified zone. The failures of the 5th Army on the western bank of the Ruza River and on the southern bank of the Moskva River are largely due to the hasty attack on the enemy defense zone, which by this time had not been reconnoitered.

3. In an offensive and a breakthrough of the enemy's defensive zone, the correct formation of battle order is essential. From this side, the operational formation of the 33rd Army before the offensive and the distribution of tanks equally among all divisions cannot be considered successful. The front of the strike group (16 km) was wide, and the distribution of tanks among divisions led to dispersal of forces. 4. During the offensive on

the Nara River, artillery support for the advancing troops was organized in the old fashioned way. Artillery preparation carried out for a certain time on a broad front does not justify itself under modern conditions. Separation of artillery fire from the advancing infantry enables the enemy to influence our infantry with their artillery and mortars and thwart their offensive. Instead of artillery preparation, it is necessary to practice an artillery offensive, gathering a bunch of artillery weapons in the most critical sectors and accompanying the advancing units with artillery fire and wheels throughout the entire depth of the offensive.

5. Management, organization of interaction between the combat arms and the support service in the offensive play a huge role. One of the main reasons why the offensive of the armies of the central section of the Western Front was not developed was shortcomings in command and control.

6. During an offensive in winter conditions, a number of difficulties arise that are not known in summer: advancement in deep snow without roads, freezing, communication difficulties, interruptions in combat and

food supply, etc. All this should be taken into account when organizing an offensive and setting tasks for the troops.

Chapter Four

Offensive on the left wing of the front

Tula offensive operation and the development of the offensive on Vysokinichi, Kaluga, Belev

The situation on the left wing of the Western

Front By December 7, 1941, the general situation on the left wing of the Western Front was as follows. As a

result of the counter-maneuver and the fighting of our 50th Army and the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, the 2nd Tank Army of General Guderian and the infantry divisions attached to it began to retreat in the south and south-west. Under the threat of encirclement, the main forces of the 2nd Panzer Army (3rd, 4th and 17th Panzer, 167th Infantry, 29th Motorized Infantry Divisions and the SS Regiment "Grossdeutschland") retreated to the Venev area and further across the Shat River, along apparently, with the aim of organizing defense at this line. To the northwest of Tula, the enemy firmly held the Aleksin area. On the Don River, in the area from the southern bank of the Stalinogorsk reservoir to the Granka, the Germans hastily erected fortifications, aimed at delaying the advance of Soviet troops from the east and ensuring the withdrawal of their units. As it later became known, the banks of the Don River were partially escaped and iced over. In places, trenches of a full profile were dug, wire was stretched in several rows and bunkers were built. On

December 7, the armies of the left wing of the Western Front occupied the following position: the 49th Army - the forest east of Burinov, Borodino, the eastern bank of the Protva River, Podmoklovo and further along the eastern bank of the Oka River to Sotino, from where the front of the army deviated to the southeast and passed through Nikulino to the junction with the 50th Army. Defensive battles continued on the right flank and in the center of the 49th Army, the left flank, in cooperation with the right flank of the 50th Army, was preparing for an offensive against the enemy's Aleksin grouping. The front of the 50th Army marched along the line of Nikulino (excl.), Nekrasovo, Mikhalkovo, Krivolu

Preparing for an offensive in a southerly direction, the 50th Army, with its left-flank divisions, in cooperation with the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, fought stubborn battles against the 2nd Tank Army east of Tula until December 7th. By the end of December 7, units of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps reached the Sosnovka, Borzovka, Aksinino, Petrovo line, preparing to continue the offensive in the direction of Venev. The 10th Army, transferred from the reserve of

the High Command to the Western Front, according to the directive of the front of December 5, was supposed to deliver the main blow in the direction of Mikhailov, Stalinogorsk from the starting line of Zakharovo, Pronsk and an auxiliary blow from the Kolomna, Zaraysk area through Serebryanye Prudy in the direction of Venev, Kurakovo. By December 7,

the 10th Army, with six rifle and one cavalry divisions in the first line, and two rifle and two cavalry divisions in the second line, reached the Serebryanye Prudy, Dmitrievka line and east of the Serebryanye Prudy, Mikhailov, Ranenburg railway line to the demarcation line with the Southwestern Front. The 61st Army of the Southwestern Front, adjacent to the left, was to advance in a westerly direction, with the 346th Rifle Division south of Skopin on its right flank. The general situation on the left wing of the Western Front by

December 7 was characterized by the cessation of enemy offensive attempts in decisive directions, his desire to withdraw manpower and equipment from the blow of the Red Army troops and the beginning of the transition of the armies of the left wing of the Western Front to a general offensive.

Features, areas and climatic conditions that influenced the course of hostilities ,

which is on the dividing line with the Southwestern Front) - 110 km; from east to west (from the Paveletskaya railway to the border of the Upa River) - 130 km. Thanks to the open, flat terrain, favorable conditions are created for tank operations. The presence of water barriers (the rivers Don, Upa, Pronya and

etc.), passing in the meridional direction and parallel to the offensive front, in winter conditions could not be a serious obstacle for single and small groups of light tanks. Heavy and medium tanks required the creation of special decks, the construction of new ones or the use of existing bridges. The ravines with steep slopes encountered in the area under consideration were an obstacle for tanks of all systems.

The presence of small forest areas to the east and southeast of Tula contributed to the actions of the cavalry. To the west of Tula, especially along the line of Dubna, Voronovo and almost the entire sector of the 49th Army, the terrain is more wooded, which helped the Germans in defensive operations and at the same time favored the troops of the left wing in covertly pulling up and concentrating reserves. Villages are located quite often; the Germans used them to create strongholds, which corresponded to the tactical methods of conducting defense by the enemy.

The main railroads that fed the troops of the left wing of the front were the Moscow-Ryazan and Paveletskaya railways, and during the struggle to the west of Tula, the Dzerzhinskaya railway. They were the main communications of the armies of the left wing of the front. The Moscow-Serpukhov-Tula highway played an important role. In the period preceding our offensive, the Germans sought to intercept the highway north of Tula, complete the encirclement of our Tula group of troops and deprive it of supplies.

The relatively deep snow cover (in some places up to 50–80 cm) created difficulties for the advancing troops. Blizzards, severe frosts (up to 35°) and snow drifts (especially during the offensive in the second half of December and early January) made it difficult for the troops to advance, forcing them to resort to clearing roads. Basically the same conditions (with the exception of the more wooded nature of the terrain) characterized the terrain and the meteorological situation during the offensive to the west of Tula in the second half of December 1941 and in January 1942.

The plans of

the parties As is known from the previous chapters, the plan of the German command (in terms of the troops of the southern wing) consisted

in order to reach the east of Moscow by means of a breakthrough and deep envelopment in the general direction of Kolomna and, having united with the troops of the northern wing, close the encirclement. A passing task in carrying out this plan was to be the capture of Tula as an important stronghold that stood in the way of the movement of the southern wing of the German armies to

Moscow. After the failure to capture Tula on the move with a frontal strike, the German command changes the axis of movement of its troops on the right wing and throws their individual groups in the northeast (to Ryazan), in the north (to Kashira) and in the northwest (to Revyakino) directions, strive first of all, to deal with our Tula grouping and after that continue the offensive in the previously adopted direction - to Moscow. The successful counter-manoeuve of the

50th Army and the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps and the offensive of the 10th Army forced the German command to abandon this plan and decide to withdraw its troops and equipment in order to save them from defeat by our troops. On this occasion, the captured document (an explanation of the headquarters of the 43rd

German army corps operating in the Tula region) says: “ ... ***When 31 infantry divisions marched on the night of 5 to 6.12, an unheard-of***

frost struck at the onset of the day - 35 °. As a result, people and weapons ended up in extremely difficult conditions. At the same time, a new enemy, unexpected in such strength, [emphasized by us] appeared at the same time. ... We had such a heavy loss of people and materials that

could not further consolidate a possible success.

At the same time, the enemy brought in new tank forces against us, especially north of Tula, which were constantly increasing. The army was forced to interrupt operations and withdraw troops to their original positions⁵⁷

The German offensive in the Stalinogorsk-Mikhailovsky direction leads to the same results, where their units, having met a counterattack by the troops of the 10th Army, begin to roll back in a southwestern direction, trying to linger on intermediate lines. As the course of events showed, such frontiers were:

- for defense against the 49th Army - the Oka River; for
- defense against the 50th Army - the Upa River and the line of strongholds from Tula to Shchekino; for defense
- against the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps - the Shat River and the fortified points of Stalinogorsk, Uzlovaya, Dedilovo and others; for defense against the 10th Army - the Don
- River south of the Stalinogorsk reservoir, the Uzlovaya line, Bogoroditsk and the line of the Plava River from Plavsk and north.

Apparently, in order to ensure the withdrawal of their troops to the indicated lines, the Germans continued to strengthen their Aleksin group throughout the entire period of the Tula operation and immediately before it (from the data of the headquarters of the Western Front of December 14, 1941). The plan of the command of the Western Front in

relation to the armies of the left wing followed from the general task of the front - the defeat and destruction of the enemy forces advancing on Moscow. One of the most important parts of this plan was the introduction by order of the Headquarters of the fresh 10th Reserve Army on the setting left wing of the front with the aim of encircling and destroying in cooperation with the 50th Army and the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps of the 2nd Tank Army of General Guderian. In accordance with this general plan, Front Directive No. 093/op of December 10 entrusted the 49th Army with the task of encircling and destroying

the enemy grouping operating between the Oka and Upa rivers in the Aleksin area. For this purpose, the 173rd and 340th rifle divisions with 20 tanks were transferred from the 50th Army to the 49th Army, which were to concentrate by December 12 in the Ilyino, Obidimo, Burkovo area and from here deliver the main blow in the general direction on Shchukino and an auxiliary strike in the direction of Morgen Rot, Surnevo, Kishkino.

The 50th Army, whose main forces were in the Tula region, was ordered by a front directive of December 8 to prepare a swift strike in the southern and southeastern directions with the task of reaching the Shchekino, Retinovka region. The enemy troops, located south-west of Tula, were ordered to be thrown back to the western bend of the Upa River.

The task of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps with the 173rd Rifle Division attached to it remained the same - to advance rapidly in the southern and southwestern directions. Directive

No. 0044 / op of December 5, transferred from the reserve of the Stavka of the 10th Army, the command of the front set the task: by going on the offensive from the starting position of Zakharovo, Pronsk, to deliver the main blow in the direction of Mikhailov, Stalinogorsk. One rifle division was supposed to deliver an auxiliary strike from the Kolomna, Zaraysk area through the Silver Ponds in the direction of Venev, Kurakovo.

The immediate task of the 10th Army was to defeat the troops of Guderian's 2nd Tank Army and capture the area of Stalinogorsk, Uzlovaya station by the end of December 10th. To ensure a junction with the 61st Army of the Southwestern Front, the army was ordered to throw at least one division in the direction of Pronsk, Epifan with the task of capturing Epifan by the end of December 10. Support for the army offensive by aviation was planned to be carried out according to a special plan, after preliminary linking it with the head of the air forces of the front.

Thus, the idea of concentric attacks on the main forces of Guderian's 2nd Panzer Army in the area of Tula, Venev, Stalinogorsk, Dedilovo, Shchekino and their destruction was laid at the heart of the operational plan of the command of the Western Front. The

implementation of this operational plan achieved the following goals: firstly, the defeat of the main forces of the southern wing of the Nazi troops advancing on Moscow, and as a result of this, the elimination of the immediate threat to the left wing of the Western Front; secondly, the creation of favorable conditions for the actions of the armies of our left wing in the western direction.

The grouping of the parties and the balance of forces (ground and air) The

grouping of the Nazi troops by December 7, 1941, according to available information, was as follows. Units of the 12th and 13th Army Corps operated in front of the front of the 49th Army at the turn of Burinovo, Tarusa and further to Aleksin. Units of the 43

army, 24th and 47th tank corps of the 2nd tank army of Guderian. On the front of the 10th Army in the area of Uzlovaya, Stalinogorsk, Serebryanye Prudy, Mikhailov, Epifan, units of the 10th and 29th motorized and 18th tank divisions, which were part of the 24th and 47th tank corps, fought. The ratio of forces of the parties is shown in the

tables on pages 318–319. From the analysis of the given data on the correlation of forces, it is clear that, while superior to the enemy in manpower, [78] the armies of the left wing were inferior to him in tanks and artillery. As for operational densities, it must be added that in the conditions of the struggle of the armies of the left wing on a wide and intermittent front (especially the 50th and 10th armies), this

ratio is not significant.

Tactical density on the main lines was completely different. Thus, in the sector of the 50th Army southwest and south of Tula, it was characterized by the following data. During December 10, at the turn of Berniki, Sudakovo, Petelino (Tula region), units of the 296th and, presumably, the 112th Infantry Divisions fought defensive battles with a total length of up to 18 km, which amounted to 8–10 km per division and thus corresponded to the normal width of the defense line of the German division. Up to four rifle divisions (258th, 290th, 217th and 154th) advanced from the side of the 50th Army in the same sector, which gave up to 4-4.5 km per division. Another example: according to reconnaissance data from December 13, units of the 137th, 263rd, 268th Infantry Divisions and, presumably, withdrawn to the reserve in the Vysokinichi region of the 260th Infantry Division, which gives from 6 to 8 km per division. Four divisions of the 49th Army were advancing on the same line, which ranged from 6 to 7 km per division. **Table of balance of forces on the left wing of the Western Front 49th, 50th, 10th Army and 1st Guards Cavalry Corps) by December 7, 1941**

Немецкие войска			
Соединения	Армейские и танковые корпуса	Армии	Всего
263-я и 268-я пехотные дивизии 52-я и 137-я пехотные дивизии 260-я пехотная дивизия (выведена в резерв) Орудий (полевых и противотанковых) — 380	12-й армейский 13-й армейский	4-я	5 пехотных дивизий
31-я и 131-я пехотные дивизии 296-я пехотная дивизия, полк СС «Великая Германия» (трехбатальонного состава) 3-я и 4-я танковые дивизии Орудий (полевых и противотанковых) — 350	43-й армейский 24-й танковый (3-я и 4-я танковые и 10-я моторизованная дивизии)	2-я танковая	До 4 пехотных дивизий, 2 танковые дивизии
167-я пехотная дивизия 17-я танковая дивизия Орудий (полевых и противотанковых) — 125	47-й танковый (17-я и 18-я танковые и 29-я моторизованная дивизии)	2-я танковая	1 пехотная, 1 танковая дивизии
10-я и 29-я моторизованные, 18-я танковая, 112-я пехотная дивизии Орудий (полевых и противотанковых) — 240	24-й и 47-й танковые	2-я танковая	2 моторизованные, 1 танковая, 1 пехотная дивизии

Наши войска		
Соединения	Армии	Всего
5-я гвардейская, 415-я, 60-я, 194-я и 238-я стрелковые дивизии Орудий (полевых и противотанковых) — 350	49-я (фронт армии около 70 км)	5 стрелковых дивизий
258-я, 290-я, 217-я, 154-я, 413-я и 340-я стрелковые, 31-я кавалерийская, 112-я танковая дивизии, 11-я, 32-я и 108-я танковые бригады, 35-й и 127-й танковые батальоны Орудий (полевых и противотанковых) — 120	50-я (фронт армии до 100 км)	6 стрелковых, 1 кавалерийская, 1 танковая дивизии, 3 танковые бригады, 2 танковых батальона
1-я и 2-я гвардейские кавалерийские дивизии, 173-я стрелковая дивизия и 9-я танковая бригада Орудий (полевых и противотанковых) — 50	Группа 1-го гвардейского кавалерийского корпуса (фронт группы около 40 км)	2 кавалерийские, 1 стрелковая дивизии, 1 танковая бригада
239-я, 322-я, 323-я, 324-я, 325-я, 326-я, 328-я и 330-я стрелковые, 41-я, 57-я и 75-я кавалерийские дивизии Орудий (полевых и противотанковых) — 285	10-я (фронт армии около 100 км)	8 стрелковых, 3 кавалерийские дивизии

The ratio of the densities of our troops and the enemy

Наши войска*	Противник перед фронтом наших армий	Соотношение	
		наши войска	немцы
49-я армия			
Одна стрелковая дивизия на 14 км фронта 6 орудий на 1 км фронта	Одна пехотная дивизия на 14 км фронта До 5,5 орудия на 1 км фронта	1 1	1
50-я армия			
Одна стрелковая и одна кавалерийская дивизии на 14 км фронта Одна танковая дивизия на 45 км фронта Менее 1 орудия на 1 км фронта	Одна пехотная дивизия на 25 км фронта Одна танковая дивизия на 50 км фронта До 3,5 орудия на 1 км фронта	1,8 1 1	1 1 3
Группа 1-го гвардейского кавалерийского корпуса			
Одна стрелковая и одна кавалерийская дивизии на 13 км фронта Одна танковая бригада на 40 км фронтана Свыше 1 орудия на 1 км фронта	Одна пехотная дивизия на 40 км фронта Одна танковая дивизия 40 км фронта Свыше 3 орудий на 4 км фронта	3 1 1	1 3 3
Наши войска*	Противник перед фронтом наших армий	Соотношение	
		наши войска	немцы
10-я армия			
Одна стрелковая и одна кавалерийская дивизии на 9 км фронта — 2,8 орудия на 1 км фронта	Одна моторизованная и одна пехотная дивизии на 35 км фронта Одна танковая дивизия на 100 км фронта 2,4 орудия на 1 км фронта	4 — 1.1	1 — 1

* Numbers are rounded everywhere.

The above calculations should be considered purely indicative, since under the conditions of the maneuverable nature of military operations on a broad front, the composition and grouping of troops often changed.

The grouping of the air forces of the parties directly on the left wing by the beginning of the counteroffensive of the Soviet troops was determined by the following data. Of the total number of Nazi aviation, the enemy could use up to 300 aircraft against the armies of the left wing of the front (25, 26 and 27th bomber, 21st and 52nd fighter squadrons), deployed in the main base areas - Maloyaroslavets, Kaluga, Yukhnov, Kirov. In some cases, apparently, aircraft from other, more distant airfield hubs were involved in the fighting.

The 49th, 50th, 10th Armies and the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps did not have their own aviation. The offensive actions of the armies of the left wing were supported by a separate air group of the Red Army Air Force, which by December 13 included the 2nd mixed aviation division (assault, dive and short-range bomber regiments), located at the Noginsk and Moninsky airfields.

In addition, units of the 77th mixed aviation division of the Western Front, stationed at the Podolsky air hub, and air regiments of the 6th aviation corps of the Moscow air defense zone, located at the airfields of Podolsk, Lipitsy, Kashira and Ramenskoye, were periodically involved in hostilities. Subsequently (mainly in the zone of the 50th and 10th armies), units of the long-range bomber aviation of the High Command reserve stationed at the Sasovsky and Kirsanov air hubs took part.

Logistics of the operation The state of the rear of the armies of the left wing was presented as follows: the 49th and 50th armies had logistics departments and supply agencies, personnel and materiel of army bases, as well as sufficient vehicles.

The stocks of ammunition, fuel and food supplies in the 49th and 50th armies, as of December 2, were as follows: 49th army - ammunition (including rifle cartridges) 1-2 ammunition; fuel 2 gas stations, food forage 4 daily dachas; 50th Army - ammunition (only mines and artillery rounds) 2 ammunition, fuel 2 refueling and food forage 4 daily dachas.

The 10th Army was in the worst position, which by the beginning of the operation was only creating logistics and supply agencies and had few vehicles, especially in divisions. Until December 16, the army did not have its own base, there were no army reserves. There were two motor battalions with a total of 528 vehicles and a horse-drawn battalion with 394 wagons and 568 sledges. It was especially bad in the divisions, where instead of 230 vehicles in the state, some divisions had only 10 vehicles. The situation with the material support of the 10th Army was further complicated by the fact that it, being operationally subordinate to the Western Front, was in the care of the main departments in relation to supplies. According

to rear directive No. 025 of December 3, 1941, the 49th Army had its bases in the areas of the Voskresensk, Bogdanovka, Khoroshevo railway stations, and the head offices of army warehouses in the areas of the Sharapova Okhota and Taruesskaya railway stations. The bases of the 50th Army

- the railway stations of Kashira, Stupino and the head offices of the field army warehouses - the Tula region.

The 10th Army, not having its own base, was provided from the bases of the High Command - Shilovo, Ryazan stations. The 1st Guards Cavalry Corps was supplied by the 50th Army, and in some cases from the front's Moscow bases. Thus, the

state of the rear of the 50th and 49th armies provided them with an offensive. The presence of reserves in Tula compensated for some remoteness of the bases of the 50th Army. As for the 10th Army, its situation with the rear during the entire period of the operation was very tense. In

general, the rear coped with the task of providing material support to the advancing troops, and in the 49th and 50th armies the stocks of ammunition were thoroughly replenished by December 17, and there were more of them than by December 6. The same situation was with fuel and lubrication.

materials. The supply was facilitated by the proximity of the rear of the armies to the bases of the front and the High Command. Local supplies of food and fodder were also used. The situation was worse in the 10th Army, where there were interruptions in supply. This was further aggravated by the weak work of the rear army apparatus. To a certain extent, this weakness in the work of the army rear was compensated for by the initiative activity of the quartermasters of the divisions, who replenished the shortage at the expense of local funds.

When describing the work of the rear in the Tula and other operations that followed it, one must bear in mind the winter conditions in which these operations took place. The work of the rear was complicated by difficulties with supplies in the conditions of the rapid advance of the armies. As a result of blizzards and snow drifts, in a number of cases, parts of the armies did not receive ammunition, fuel and food at the right time and were forced to limit themselves to the available supplies. In general, in connection with the winter conditions, the armies of the left wing of the front experienced difficulties during the entire period of operations.

The first stage of the Tula operation (December 7–14, 1941)

Offensive operations on the left flank of the 49th Army and defense on its right flank and in the center

One of the main tasks of the 49th Army in the period of December 4–7 was to assist its left-flank units of the 50th Army in the direction of Revyakino (north of Tula) in order to destroy the enemy grouping that had broken through into this area. In its instructions to the commander of the 49th Army, the front command repeatedly noted the importance of completing this task, ordering ***"to enter into communications and fire interaction and ensure the normal supply and supply of Boldin's units in the Tula region"*** (from the order of the chief of staff of the front of December 5, 1941). The same goal was pursued by uniting the command of the 340th rifle and 112th tank divisions and other units in one hand and aiming this group in the direction of Revyakino, Kostrovo.

The right-flank units of the army continued to strengthen their positions in the Serpukhov region during December 4-6 and fought defensive battles. During the specified period on the right flank and in the center

The enemy did not show much activity in the army, rare artillery, mortar and machine-gun fire was fired from both sides, and reconnaissance groups were carried out. On the left wing of the army, in the Aleksin

area, on the night of December 5, units of the 238th Infantry Division launched an attack against fascist German units in the Savino, Kaznacheevo, Morgen Rot sector and occupied these points. From December 6, the 238th Rifle Division fought defensive battles along its entire front, repelling enemy attempts to advance from the Aleksin area, where the Germans had a fairly strong grouping. The advance of this grouping at the junction of the 49th and 50th armies,

northwest of Tula, could again create a threat to the latter and prevent the deployment of military operations in the Shchekino direction. On the other hand, the planned turn of the 50th Army from the south to the west and northwest urgently demanded the liquidation of the Aleksin bridgehead of the enemy and the cleansing of the western bank of the Oka River in this area. In addition, the defeat of the Aleksin group of Germans provided the 50th Army with more favorable opportunities for an attack on Kaluga.

In development of the directive of the commander of the Western Front, General Zhukov, No. 093 / op dated December 10, 1941 (which required the encirclement and destruction of the enemy grouping operating between the Oka and Upa rivers during December 13–14), the commander of the 49th Army, General Zakharkin, created a separate task force. It included the 238th Rifle Division and the 340th and 173rd Rifle Divisions transferred from the 50th Army on December 10. By order No. 1 for the operational group, issued on December 12, 1941, the units were assigned the following general tasks:

- to deliver the

- main blow with the forces of the 340th and 173rd rifle divisions on Pleshivka, Shchukino;

- to deliver an auxiliary strike with the forces of the 238th Infantry Division with the 20th Guards Mortar Division - in the direction of Bunyrev, Aleksin in order to encircle and destroy the Aleksin group of the enemy in cooperation with the divisions that delivered the main blow. Within this general task, the following immediate tasks

- were assigned to the divisions in accordance with Order No. 1: 238th Rifle

the division with its right flank was to advance in the direction of Kashcheev, Aleksin, and with the center and left flank - on Shelepino, Surnevo (3 km southwest of Shelepino) with the task of capturing the line of Kashcheev, Shelepino by the end of December 15 and subsequently developing a strike on Aleksin. Ensuring the right flank of the division was assigned to a specially detached detachment as part of a reinforced company, which was thrown onto the western bank of the Oka River with its exit behind enemy lines on the western outskirts of Aleksin. The 173rd Rifle Division was to attack the Germans on the Pronino front (excl.), height 210.3, and by the end of December 14, reach the line of Belolipki, Lomintsevo (excl.), and subsequently advance on the southern outskirts of Aleksin. The 340th Rifle Division with the 36th Guards Mortar Battalion and a separate tank battalion, having destroyed the opposing enemy, was to reach the Lomintsevo-Dudnevo line (3 km south of Lomintsevo) by the end of December 14 and subsequently

advance on Shchukino. The start of the offensive was scheduled for 7 o'clock on December 14. As can be seen from the tasks considered by the parts of the operational group, the command of the 49th Army had the goal of encircling and destroying the grouping of German troops in the area east and southeast of Aleksin and subsequently developing the offensive in the north-western direction in cooperation with the 1st Army.

The combat events on the front of the task force unfolded as follows. Fulfilling the order of the army command, parts of the operational group on the morning of December 14 went on the offensive. In the first half of the day, the 238th Rifle Division captured Bunyrev and Pogiblov (1 km northeast of Bunyrev) and, having surrounded Botnya, fought for Goryanovo (1.5 km southwest of Kaznacheyev). The 173rd Rifle Division captured Pronin and advanced on Esipovo (0.5 km west of Pronin). The 340th Rifle Division fought for Glebovo and Skorovarov (2 km south of Glebov).

In all sectors of the army task force, the enemy offered stubborn resistance, pulling up tanks and reserves from the depths. Intelligence data confirmed the actions of the enemy's 131st and 31st infantry divisions in the Aleksinsky region. Aerial reconnaissance and observation noted the accumulation of tanks in Aleksin (up to 120 vehicles) and in Myshega. According to the same data, movement to the line was established

front of a large number of vehicles (up to 500), tanks and carts. On the afternoon of December 14, as a result of counterattacks undertaken, the enemy forced units of the 238th Infantry Division to leave Bunyrevno and Pogiblovo.

During December 15, units of the 238th Rifle Division, repulsing numerous counterattacks of the Nazi troops, fought a stubborn battle at the same line. In the Botni area, the enemy used flamethrowers against the advancing battle formations of our units.

The offensive of the 173rd and 340th rifle divisions developed more successfully, by the end of December 15, the 173rd rifle division captured Spas-Kanin (3 km northwest of Pronin) and fought for Stupino and Berezovka (both points 5 km west of Pronin) , and the 340th Rifle Division occupied Popovka and advanced on Zakharovka. On the night of December 16, units of the left flank of the army secured the occupied points and were preparing to continue the offensive from the morning of

December 16. In the remaining sectors of the front of the 49th Army, the following events took place during the period described. On the right flank of the army, the 415th Rifle Division was still defending the occupied line, and the 5th Guards and 60th Rifle Divisions carried out a partial offensive in the direction of Vorontsovka (20 km west of Serpukhov), N. Vyazovaya and in the direction of Ostrov. Parts of the army center were fighting on the western bank of the Oka. Intelligence data established the accumulation of enemy troops in the Vysokinichi area.

Thus, as a result of the fighting on the front of the 49th Army over the past period, it can be noted: firstly, the strengthening of the enemy in the Vysokinichi region in order to hold this region; secondly, the stubborn defense of our units on the extreme right flank of the army (especially the 415th rifle division) in order to secure this flank and the beginning of its activation; thirdly, the continued strengthening of the enemy in the Aleksinsky region and his stubborn resistance in order to hold this bridgehead.

The offensive of the 50th Army in cooperation with the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps and the 10th Army in a southerly direction in order to defeat the German 2nd Tank Army

As a result of previous battles, the troops of the 50th Army by the morning of December 8 reached the line Ploschanka, Fedorovka, Mikhalkovo, Novo Tulskey, Kolodeznaya, preparing for a further offensive. Parts of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, adjacent to the left, by the same time reached the front of Studenets, Isakovo, Prichal, having mastered the indicated points.

The common front of the 50th and 10th armies and the 1st guards cavalry corps by December 8 was a horseshoe, with its inner side facing the enemy, and the main forces of the 2nd tank army of the Germans were in the Venevsko-Dedilovo-Stalinogorsk region, favorable opportunities for the left wing of the front for a concentric strike. In particular, for the 50th Army, it seemed possible to strike from the Tula region to the south and southeast to cut off the escape route for units of the 3rd, 4th and 17th Panzer, 167th Infantry Divisions and the enemy SS regiment on Shchekino, Dedilovo. Given this situation, the Military Council of the front on the morning of 8

December 1941 gave the directive to the 50th Army:

***"In connection with the withdrawal of the Guderian group in the southern direction and the exit of the Golikov army to the Gagarino region (10 km south of Mikhailovo), prepare a swift strike in the southern and southeastern directions to reach the Shchekino, Retinovka region. The enemy, located on the Mikhalkov, Aleshnya site, should be thrown back on the river. Upa."*[79]**

The offensive was ordered to begin on the morning of December 8, 1941. In accordance with the directive of the front, the commander of the 50th Army, General Boldin, made the following decision on the same day. Since the main object of the army's actions is the enemy grouping in the area of Kosaya Gora, Yasnaya Polyana, Shchekino, concentrate the efforts of the main forces of the army to defeat this grouping. To this end, the divisions of the center (290th, 217th and 154th), acting in converging directions, were to surround the enemy in the area of Kosaya Gora, Yasnaya Polyana and subsequently go to the area indicated by the directive of the front. The right-flank 258th Rifle Division, pushing the enemy back to the western bend of the Upa River, was supposed to ensure the fulfillment of the task by the divisions of the center. Left-flank 413th and 340th

Rifle divisions, along with providing a strike in the direction of Shchekino, were to advance on Dedilovo, cutting off the escape route of the Venevsko-Dedilovo-Stalinogorsk grouping of Germans, which was aimed at by the attacks of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps and the 10th Army. Thus, the idea and decision of the commander of the 50th Army corresponded to the idea of front command.

In the spirit of the above decision, the troops of the army by order No. 35 of 8 December, the following tasks were set:

a) the 258th Infantry Division with a battery of a separate guards mortar battalion, leaving a barrier at the turn of Manshino, Ketri, strike in the direction of Aleshnia, Voskresenskoye, having the task of capturing Aleshnia by the end of December 8 and further reaching the western bend of the Upa River in the Pavshino sector, Freedom.

b) the 290th Infantry Division advance with all its forces in the direction of Kharin, Kosaya Gora and by the end of December 8, reach the Odoevskoye highway, having captured Khopilovo, Dementyev (both points 8 km southwest of Tula). c) the 217th

Rifle Division with a battery of a separate guards mortar battalion advance with all its forces in the direction of Mikhalkovo, Kosaya Gora, Shchekino and by the end of December 8, capture Kosaya Gora, Tolstovsky (3 km southeast of Kosaya Gora).

d) the 154th Rifle Division, holding the line of defense on the southern outskirts of Tula to the village of Novo-Tulsky with two regiments, strike with one regiment in the direction of Krutoye, Prilepa (southeast of Krutoy b km) and by the end of December 8, capture the Krutoe, Krasnaya line Upa (4 km east of Krutoy).

e) the 413th Rifle Division with the 166th NKVD Regiment, the 112th Tank Division[80] and a separate guards mortar division strike in the direction of the Prisada station, Dedilovo, together with the 340th Rifle Division, destroy the enemy on the northern bank of the Shat River and to At the end of December 8, capture the Ozerki line (3 km west of Prisada station), Maryino (2 km north of Prisada station).

f) the 340th Rifle Division[81] with the 131st Tank Brigade and a separate guards mortar division, with a strike in the direction of Novoselebenskoye, together with the 413th Rifle Division, destroy the enemy on the northern bank of the Shat River and by the end of December 8 reach the Zabusovo, Treshevo line .

g) the 31st Cavalry Division to secure the left flank of the army and by the end of December 8, capture Kryukov (3 km north of Arsenyev), and later, having occupied Arsenyev, cut off the enemy's retreat from Venev to Bolokhovka. The reconnaissance of the division was ordered to be conducted in the direction of Uzlovaya, Stalinogorsk 2nd, Venev. One rifle regiment and a tank battalion remained in the army reserve with the task of covering the Venev-Tula highway.

The offensive of the army units according to the stated order proceeded as follows:

The 258th Rifle Division, advancing in the direction of Aleshnya, captured Ploschanka and Pomogalovo (3 km west of Fedorovka) in the first half of the day on December 9. The fascist German units, trying to delay the offensive of the division, repeatedly launched counterattacks from the Izvol region to Zanino (1 km northeast of Ploschanka). In the center and on the left flank of the 258th Infantry Division, the Germans also offered stubborn resistance.

The 290th Rifle Division, advancing in the direction

of Khopilovo (2 km west of Kharin), met the strongest opposition at the line of Fedorovka, Yamna, Maslovo (2 km southeast of Yamna). On December 8, units of the division fought a street battle in Yamny, knocking out German units that had settled there. The 217th Rifle Division was advancing in the direction of Kosaya Gora. On

the night of December 9, units of the division captured the Nizh. Elkin, Pirov (both points 2–3 km north of Kosaya Gora). In front of the front of the 290th and 217th rifle divisions, units of the 296th infantry

divisions of the Germans.

In the areas of the remaining divisions of the army, approximately a similar picture.

Overcoming the stubborn resistance of units of the 296th Infantry Division and the SS Regiment "Grossdeutschland", the 50th Army by the end of December 10 reached the front of Aleshnya, Koptevo, Tatyev (2 km northwest of Kharin), Prudnoye (2 km east of Kharin), Petelino, Teploe (7 km east of Novo-Tulskoye).

On the morning of December 11, the Military Council of the front, in development of the previously set tasks, issues a new directive (No. 094 / op), according to which the 50th Army was to:

"a) A blow in the direction of svh. Udarnik (3 km north-west of Kharin), Shevelevka, Solosovka (8 km south-west of Kosaya Gora), Trosna (2 km . Shchekino).

b) A blow from the front of Krutoye, Maryino (2 km of the northern station of Prissada) in the direction of Nizh. Prissady (2 km north - west station Prissady), Gora Uslan, B. Mostovaya (6 km east Retinovka)

go to the same area. c) On the front of Strukovo, Skuratovo (both points south of Tula 7 km) firmly tie down the enemy.

Thus, the command of the front, aiming both flanks of the army in a southerly direction, while pinning down the enemy in the center, had in mind to cut off the escape routes of the enemy grouping south of Tula, surround it and destroy it.

According to the same directive, the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, adjacent to the left, in cooperation with the 50th Army, was to advance in the direction of Dedilovo, Zubarevka, Zhitovo, with the task of preventing the enemy's Tula grouping from retreating to the south.

In accordance with the directive of the front, the command of the 50th Army on the same day issued Order No. 38, according to which the tasks of the divisions were somewhat changed. In particular, the deadlines for reaching these milestones were somewhat delayed. Along with this, the main enemy grouping (the 296th Infantry Division and the SS Regiment "Grossdeutschland") in the Shchekino area, which was more or less correctly identified, forced the main forces of the army to concentrate on defeating this

grouping. The tasks **of the 258th Infantry Division** basically remained unchanged - a strike in the direction of Aleshnya, Voskresenskoye, with the immediate task of reaching the Baboshino-Dyagilevo line.

The 290th Rifle Division was supposed to reach the Intyushevo-Zaitsevo line on December 11 and by the end of December 12 - Kurakovo, Trufanovo

junction. **The 217th Rifle Division** with the 112th Panzer Division received the immediate task of December 11 to capture Yasnaya Polyana and to take Shchekino by

the end of the same day. **The 154th rifle division** with its main forces was aiming at the Lomintsevo, Plekhanovo front (2 km east of Lomintsev) with the task

to master both points by the end of December 11th.

With the release of the 217th and 154th rifle divisions in the Shchekino area, the defeat of the Nazi group in this area was to be completed. In accordance with this, the dividing lines of the 290th and 217th rifle divisions also changed somewhat. By the end of December 12 , **the 413th Rifle Division**

was to reach the Dolgoe-Panino line (both points west of Dedilov, 2 km), having previously captured Bolokhovka. In such a grouping, units of the army continued the offensive from December

11. In the second half of December 11, the 258th Rifle Division, overcoming

enemy resistance on its right flank and in the center, reached the Merlinovka line (2 km east of Pavshin), Baboshino, Loshachie, Gorodenki (both points 3–5 km east of Baboshin), capturing all points. In this area, the actions of the German 31st Infantry Division were noted. By the end of December 12, units of the 258th Rifle Division fought out on the Upa River in the Porechye, Sloboda section (3 km northeast of Voskresenskoye), and advanced detachments to Voskresenskoye, cutting the Odoevskoye highway in this area. In the following days, the main forces of the division begin to regroup in the western and northwestern directions in order to carry out new tasks. After December 15, the turn to the north-western direction begins and the rest of the army divisions. This turn to a new direction was caused by the interests of the front-line operation; it basically

ended by December 18 and immediately after the regrouping resulted in the Kaluga operation of the 50th army.

The 290th Rifle Division, overcoming the resistance of units of the 296th Infantry Division of the Germans, fought forward and by the end of December 13 reached the Intyushevo-Pyatnitskoye line. Both villages were turned by the Germans into strongholds, and stubborn battles began to take them. After December 13, the 290th Rifle Division, having captured these points, began to regroup to the west. Parts of the 217th Rifle Division fought with varying

success on the outskirts of Kosaya Gora, where the enemy had the most serious

resistance, especially on the line Sudakovo, Ivanovskie Dachi (both points 1–2 km north and northeast of Kosaya Gora). The battle on this line continued until nightfall; at night, parts of the division put themselves in order for a further offensive. In the following days until December 14, units of the division reached the Ugryuma line (3 km west of Yasnaya Polyana), Yasnaya Polyana, Ovsyannikovo (4 km northeast of Yasnaya Polyana), having captured these points.

The offensive of the units of the 154th Infantry Division developed mainly along the Upa River, in a southeasterly direction. The enemy put up the strongest resistance with units of the 296th and 112th Infantry Divisions and the SS Regiment near B. Elovaya (3 km southwest of Novo Tulskeye), Petelin, which he turned into strongholds.

After a fierce battle, the resistance of the Germans at B. Elovaya and Petelin was broken, and on December 14, the 154th Rifle Division, developing an offensive on Lutovinovo (8 km west of Bolokhovka), reached the Krutoye, Vechernyaya Zarya, Sergievskoye fronts (the last two points in 2 and 6 km east of Krutoy). By the same time, the 413th Infantry Division, adjacent to the left, captured Podosinki, Zamyatin, Krutoy (all 5 km southwest of Bolokhovka). The most fierce battles of the division had to be fought on the Shat River in the area from the Prisada station and

to the east. During this period, the 340th Rifle Division was reassigned to the commander of the 49th Army and sent to the Obidimo, Yakovlevo area (6–7 km northwest of Tula) for operations on the left flank of the 49th Army against the enemy Aleksin grouping. The 173rd Rifle Division, taken from the command of the commander of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps and transferred to the 49th Army, was also regrouping in the same direction. Covering the left flank of the army, the 31st cavalry division, without encountering serious enemy resistance, on December 13 went to the Ivrovka, Kuchino, Olkhovka area (all 4 km west of Arsenyev) and concentrated in this area.

Thus, when summing up the results of the combat operations of the 50th Army in the first stage of the operation, it should be noted that, despite the decisive offensive of our troops, most of the units failed to reach the lines indicated by Army Order No. 38 within the scheduled time frame. In fact, the pace of the offensive turned out to be slower - an average of 1.5–2 km per day. This can be explained by the fact that, firstly,

parts of the army went on the offensive after strong previous fighting and were tired. Secondly, the offensive was carried out in winter conditions and, thirdly (most importantly), in the face of opposition from the enemy, who offered strong resistance - especially during December 13, at the lines: a) Zaitsevo, Pyatnitskoye, covering the Tula-Odoev highway ;

b) Sudakovo, Ivanovskie Dachi, north and northeast of Kosaya Gora 1-2 km, covering the Tula-Orel highway; c) B. Elovaya, Petelino, covering the Tula-Dedilovo highway. The purpose of all these actions was to cover the withdrawal of the main forces

Germans in the southern and southwestern directions.

The group of General Belov, after stubborn battles for Mordves, developed an offensive on Venev. In front of the front of the cavalry corps, units of the 17th tank, 167th infantry and 29th motorized divisions of the Nazi troops retreated with battles. On the morning of December

9, the 1st Guards Cavalry Division, in cooperation with the 173rd Infantry Division, captured Venev in combat and, pursuing the enemy, in the first half of the same day reached the Terebush-Lopatino line. The 173rd Rifle Division was left in Venev, from where it was then transferred to the left flank of the 49th Army for an offensive against the Aleksin group of Germans. The corps was given the 322nd Rifle Division from the 10th Army.

By the same time, the 2nd Guards Cavalry Division with the 9th Tank Brigade entered the Medvedka, Gati area with the task of advancing on Stalinogorsk 2nd. In the morning of December 10, the 2nd Guards Cavalry Division approached Stalinogorsk 2nd with its advanced units and started a battle with the enemy defending it. By that time, the main forces of the cavalry corps had reached the front of Pozhilki, Mikhailovka (10 km south of Venev), Urusovo. The battle for Stalinogorsk lasted about two days. The commander of the 2nd Guards Cavalry Division,

leaving two regiments to attack from the front in order to pin down the enemy, threw the other two regiments around Stalinogorsk 2nd from the west and from the northeast. The cavalry regiment and the 9th tank brigade, advancing from the east, had to pass through the ice, and several tanks and a battery of guards mortars failed and sank. As a result of covering

On the night of December 11, the 2nd Guards Cavalry Division captured Stalinogorsk 2nd and by the morning of that day concentrated in its area, throwing out one cavalry regiment as a forward detachment in the direction of Stalinogorsk 1st. After the occupation

of Stalinogorsk, the 1st cavalry group of General Belov, following the directive of the front No. 095, begins to turn in a southwestern direction. The German 17th Panzer, 167th Infantry and part of the 29th Motorized Division unsuccessfully tried to delay the advance of the corps. To this end, the enemy blew up a dam on the Shat River in the Verkh area. Petrovo (3 km southwest of Arseniev), Prokhorovka (3 km north of Stalinogorsk 1st). However, these attempts to stop our advance proved fruitless. Parts of the cavalry corps, surrounding individual enemy groups and bypassing some of its strongholds, continued the pursuit. In some places (for example, the 1st Guards Cavalry Division in Kukuy) had to fight in street battles.

As a result of the successful actions of our cavalry, the resistance of the Germans at the turn of the Shat River was broken, and by 4 p.m. On December 13, the cavalry corps, having the 322nd rifle division on the right with a ledge back, reached the line of Lipnya, Berezovka, Ogarevka, Shakhovskoye, Pashkovo (all 8-10 km west and southwest of Stalinogorsk 1st), occupying all these points. The advanced units of the 2nd Guards Cavalry Division started a battle on the outskirts of the Uzlovaya station.

The course of hostilities on the front of the 10th Army

(December 7–14) The 10th Reserve Army of General Golikov, included in the front, went to the front on December 6: 322nd Rifle Division - Klemovo, Okunkovo, Rybkino (5 km east of Okunkovo); The 330th Rifle Division fought around Mikhailov from the north; The 328th Rifle Division fought near Mikhailov, on its eastern side; The 323rd Rifle Division, from the line north of Slobodka, advanced on Mikhailov from the southeast; 324th Rifle Division - Slobodka, Pecherniki; 325th Rifle Division - Pecherniki, Berezovo; 326th Infantry Division - Durnoye, Semenovskoye; The 41st Cavalry Division from the Vysokoye area was moving towards Katino; The 239th Rifle Division, remaining in the army reserve, had the task of reaching the Durnoye, Telyatniki area (northwest of the Durnoe

2 km); The 57th cavalry division, remaining in the army reserve, was supposed to reach the Mamonovo, Bulychevo area by the end of December 6; The 75th cavalry division was in Ryazan,[82] and after December 6 it was transferred to the left

flank of the army. Initially, the task force of the army headquarters, and then the entire headquarters of the 10th army, moved from Shilov to Starozhilovo. The neighbor of the 10th Army on the left - the 346th Infantry Division of the 61st Army of the

Southwestern Front - was on the Skopin line. In accordance with the directive of the front of December 5, the army commander on the same day issued order No. 002,[83] according to which the main groupings of the 29th and 10th motorized divisions of the Nazi troops were determined in the areas of Serebryanye Prudy, Mikhailov. To the south, units of the 18th Panzer Division were noted, and subsequently units of the 112th Infantry also acted in these divisions.

The army delivered the main blow in the general direction to Mikhailov from the front of Zakharovo, Pronsk. The 322nd Rifle Division was given the task of going on the offensive in the direction of Serebryannye Prudy and capturing the latter by the end of December 6, with a view to further developing a strike on Venev; The 330th, 328th and 323rd Rifle Divisions were tasked with capturing Mikhailovo. The remaining divisions were aiming in the direction of Stalinogorsk, and the 41st Cavalry Division was thrown in the direction of Epifan. Fulfilling

the task, the troops of the 10th Army, by the end of December 7, captured Serebryanye Prudy, Mikhailovo and reached the line of Eliseevka, Mochily, Kurlyshevo, B. Dorohinka, Gagarino station and to the south. In front of the army front, rearguard battles were fought by the 29th and 10th motorized and 18th tank divisions and other small enemy infantry units and subunits. The Germans did not put up particularly strong resistance on the left flank of the 10th Army.

In particular, the 41st cavalry division, fighting at the line of Nyukhovets, Bogoslovo, Petrushino (all points 15 km northeast of Epifan), had against itself the 40th communications regiment from the 2nd tank army. According to the front headquarters, Guderian's headquarters was also located in this area. With more decisive and quick actions of the 41st Cavalry Division, an opportunity was provided to capture Guderian's headquarters, which the front command indicated to the commander of the 10th Army. The offensive of the left flank units of the army proceeded slowly and lagged behind the right flank. In particular, at the moment when the right-flank divisions (322, 330, 328, 323 and 324th) were at the line of Eliseevka, Mochily, Kurlyshevo, B. Dorohinka, the left-flank divisions were moving back in a ledge. For example, the 325th Rifle Division was 8–10 km behind, while the 326th Rifle Division was only moving towards Gryaznoye (near the Gagarino station). The 41st Cavalry Division was on the same meridian as the

326th Rifle Division. This circumstance forced the front command to repeatedly point out the slow pace of the offensive and demand that it be accelerated. At the cost of extreme exertion of forces, it was necessary to prevent the enemy from leaving. The front headquarters demanded that mobile detachments be immediately thrown deep to the west in order to intercept the enemy's escape routes. On the morning of December 8, this demand was repeated once again, and it was reported that the enemy, under the blows of the 50th Army and the 1st Guards

Cavalry Corps, was quickly retreating to Stalinogorsk. On December 10 and 11, the front command, by directives No. 94 and 95 / op, categorically confirmed the task of the 10th Army: to continue the offensive and, in cooperation with the group of General Belov, develop an attack on Plavak, with

the immediate task of reaching the Bogoroditsk, Kuzovka front by the end of December 11. In the spirit of these directives, the commander of the 10th Army, General Golikov, on the morning of December 11, issued Order No. 06, according to which the 330th, 328th, 324th, 323rd, and front station Uzlovaya, Bogoroditsk, Kuzovka. The operational group of the

army headquarters was in Mikhailov. During December 8–10, units of the army continued their offensive in the directions indicated by them. By the end

the division, fighting with enemy detachments covering the retreat, reached the Khlopovo-Rogachevka line, from where it was preparing to advance in a southerly direction. The 328th Rifle Division, approaching the Don River at the Bobriky-Mikhailovka sector, met strong resistance and fought during the afternoon of December 11. The 41st cavalry division, overcoming the resistance of the German units covering the retreat, reached the Don River at the Bolshaya Kolodeznaya, Khmelevka sector (both points at the southern end of the Stalinogorsk reservoir), but under heavy fire from the enemy artillery was forced to withdraw with losses to the Ivankovo area.

Only in the afternoon of December 12, enemy resistance on the Don River was broken, and by December 13 units of the 328th Infantry Division reached the Bobriky-Mikhailovka line. By the same time, the 330th Infantry Division, adjacent to the right, having driven back the opposing enemy units, occupied a grove southeast of Urvanka. On the left flank

of the army, on December 13, the 324th Rifle Division occupied Lyutorichi (on the Don River) with battle and advanced to the west. On the same

day, the 323rd Rifle Division, having broken the resistance of units of the 10th Motorized Division and, apparently, individual units of the 112th Infantry Division, occupied Epifan. The

326th Rifle Division, overcoming the opposition of small groups of Germans, advanced to the Kamenka-Klinovoe line, which it occupied by the end of December 14th. After that, the division advanced in a westerly direction. On December 13, the 239th Rifle Division, which was in the second echelon of the army, entered the area of Sukhanovo, Buchalki,

Krasnoye. The 57th and 76th cavalry divisions (thrown to the left flank of the army from Ryazan) moved extremely slowly; on the afternoon of December 13, the 57th cavalry division was in the area of Valshuta, Katino, Churiki (8 km northeast of Bogoslov), and the 75th cavalry division went to the Samodurovka area. Thus,

as a result of the offensive of the 10th Army from December 7 to 13 the following can be noted:

1. The army launched an offensive on a wide front (up to 80 km) in conditions of dispersal of divisions in points significantly

remote from one another. In this situation, increased demands were placed on the army's communications service, which was supposed to ensure uninterrupted control of the formations. However, the communication service did not cope with this task. So, during December 8–9, the army command, due to poor communications, did not know where the army units were located. The circumstance that the 10th Army was insufficiently supplied with communications equipment also played a significant role. By the way, the lack of a sufficient number of means of communication affected the management of army units and in subsequent operations.

2. While the offensive of the right flank of the army was carried out at a more or less rapid pace (the 330th Infantry Division moved an average of 9 km per day from December 7 to 13), the divisions of the left flank advanced relatively slowly, which undoubtedly had a negative effect on implementation of the directive of the front No. 095 / op of December 11.

When summing up the results of the first stage of the Tula offensive operation, it is necessary to note the main thing in the actions of the armies of the left wing of the front - the beginning of the defeat of the Germans and the development of the attack on the defending enemy into his pursuit. This was one of the first, most tangible successes of the troops of the Western Front in the

battle for Moscow. In operational terms, the counteroffensive of the armies of the left wing, which was carried out for 5-6 days, was a concentric attack in converging directions with the necessary interaction of the armies with each other. The implementation of such a maneuver in the conditions of a snowy winter and severe frosts once again testifies to the courage of the operational plan of the Headquarters and the command of the Western Front and the combat readiness of our troops.

The link between the 50th and 10th Armies was the group of the commander of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps. The nature of the actions of our cavalry in the first stage of the Tula operation (as well as in its second stage) is a combination of cavalry formation with actions on foot in close tactical cooperation with attached rifle units and tanks. The horse in this case served as a means of faster maneuver.

In the tactical operations of a cavalry group, the methods of wedging individual cavalry

regiments between the rearguards of the enemy, as well as the coverage and encirclement of individual strongholds and military groups of the Germans.

The second stage of the Tula operation (December 15–19, 1941) The

heavily battered units of the enemy's 2nd Tank Army continued to retreat south and southwest, beyond Dedilovo, Shchekino and further to Bogoroditsk and Plavsk, losing weapons, equipment and manpower. According to the testimonies of the prisoners, out of 6,000 soldiers of the SS Regiment "Grossdeutschland" only about 2,000 remained.[84] In front of the front of the armies of the left wing, as before, the same enemy units were operating as by December 7th. In some areas, these units were reinforced by reinforcements from the rear. In particular, in the Aleksin area, the reinforcement of the left flank of the 43rd Army Corps with infantry and tanks was again noted. This once again confirmed the desire of the German command to retain the Aleksin bridgehead.

The armies of the left wing continued their offensive mainly in the same grouping that had formed during the first stage of the operation. Only in the 50th Army, towards the end of the first stage, as we have seen, did a partial regrouping of the units of the right flank to the western and then to the northwestern direction begin.[85] The 61st Army of the Southwestern Front, adjacent to the left, by the end of December 13—

reached the line of Mikhailovskoye, Rakhmanova, B. Mokhovaya, Zaleskoye, Efremov, having the task of continuing the offensive in a westerly direction.

The development of the offensive of the 49th Army in the center and on the left flank under holding down operations on the right flank (December 15–19)

The tasks of the 49th Army for the period following December 14 were determined by Front Directive No. 0104 / op dated December 18, according to which the 49th Army was to

“during December 14-15, destroy the enemy Aleksin grouping, further developing success in the direction of Nedelnoye. On the morning of December 15, a group of one page division and four page brigades with reinforcements from their original position Iskon, excl. Tarusa - deliver the main blow in the direction of Kuzmishchevo, Vysokinichi.

An auxiliary strike, according to the same directive, was to be delivered by divisions on the right flank of the army. By the end of December 18, the army would go out with its main forces to the front of Komarovo, Chernaya Gryaz, Nedelnoye, Akhlebnino. The directive established a dividing line with the 50th Army - Titovo (excl.),

Akhlebnino, Kaluga, Pletnevka. In accordance with the directive of the front, the commander of the 49th Army on December 15 issued order No. , 26th, 30th and 34th rifle brigades,[87] 18th and 23rd tank brigades) in the direction of Saltykovo, Gosteshevo. The right wing of the army (415th, 5th Guards and 60th Rifle Divisions) delivered an auxiliary blow in the direction of N. Vyazovnya with the task of reaching the line of N. Vyazovnya, Troitskoye, and the 415th Rifle Division was active individual detachments were supposed to tie down the enemy and prevent the transfer of his reserves in a southerly direction.

The left-flank divisions (238th, 173rd and 340th) were to complete the destruction of the Aleksin group of Germans and develop success in the north-western direction, to Petrishchevo. The

artillery was assigned the task of preparing fire on the southern part of Volkovskoye, Saltykovo, Bolsunovo (2 km south of Saltykovo) and ensuring the capture and retention of a bridgehead on the western bank of the Oka River in the indicated directions by the army strike group. Along with this, the artillery was supposed to prevent the advance of the enemy from Tarusa, Kuzmishchev and Seliverstov.

Both tank brigades were attached to the divisions of the shock group (194th and 133rd) and carried out the tasks assigned to them by the division

commanders. The aviation providing the offensive (a separate group of the Red Army Air Forces) was tasked with covering the army's strike force, assisting in the fulfillment of its tasks and preventing enemy reserves from approaching the battlefield of the strike group from the south and

west. As can be seen from the tasks assigned to the divisions, the offensive was based on the idea of concentric envelopment of a group of enemy troops in the corner formed by the confluence of the Oka and Protva, and overwhelming a group of enemy troops in the Tarusa area. Plan

The army commander was approved by the front command, and it was ordered to begin its implementation on the scheduled date. However, the actual course of events was somewhat different. On the morning of

December 16, units of the army began to carry out their tasks. The enemy offered resistance everywhere; he put up especially stubborn resistance on the right flank, in the Troitskoye, Kuzmishchevo sector, and on the left flank, in the Naryshkino sector (3 km east of Belolipki), Popovka, using positions prepared in advance. The 5th Guards and 60th Rifle Divisions moved forward somewhat on December 16, and over the next

day they unsuccessfully fought in a forest area to the west and southwest of the Vysokoye-Maleevo line.

The 194th Rifle Division also moved forward and by 12 o'clock on December 17 occupied Novoselki, Ershovo (3 km southeast of Ostrov) and fought for Troitskoye, which the enemy had turned into a center of resistance. In the first half of December 19, the defense was overcome, and the division developed success in the direction of Gosteshevo.

The 133rd Rifle Division, the 26th and 19th Rifle Brigades were fighting on the western bank of the Oka River at the Saltykovo-Tarusa line. The city of Tarusa was taken by the 19th Infantry Brigade on December

19th. The enemy units located on the southern bank of the Protva River retreated to the Vysokinichi region, where, apparently, a grouping of troops was created in order to hold this region. According to reconnaissance, units of the 260th and 52nd Infantry Divisions were operating at the Tarusa-Troitskoye line, and the 263rd, 137th and 268th Infantry Divisions were fighting north of the Protva River. On the Aleksinsky direction, units of the left flank of the army, having broken the resistance of the Nazi troops at the line of Bunyrev, Naryshkino, Popovka, came directly to the Oka River. The 238th Rifle Division at 15:30 on December 17 captured Aleksin and developed success in a northwestern direction. The 173rd and 340th rifle divisions reached the Fomishchevo-Shchukino sector, and on December 19 they crossed to the western bank of the Oka and advanced in a westerly direction. The fascist German units, abandoning materiel, withdrew under cover of the rearguards to the west and northwest.

In the considered combat operations of the 49th Army, one can note, firstly, the transition to a successful offensive on the entire front of the army, beyond

with the exception of its extreme right flank (415th rifle division); secondly, the most stubborn resistance of the enemy in the area of the 5th Guards and 60th Rifle Divisions, which was facilitated by the nature of the terrain (forest), and, thirdly, the mostly successful resolution of tasks by the divisions of the center and left flank with the deviation of the 173rd and the 340th Rifle Divisions from the indicated axis of movement (especially the 340th Rifle Division) in the northwestern and western directions. The latter happened due to the fact that a significant part of the forces of the Aleksin grouping of the enemy retreated to the southwest (to the Titovo, Vysokoye, Stolbovo regions), from where, during the development of the Kaluga operation, it created a threat to the 50th Army, hanging over its right flank.

Development of the offensive of the 50th Army in cooperation with the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps and the 10th Army in a southerly direction in order to destroy the retreating troops of the enemy 2nd Tank Army

For the period after December 13, the tasks of the 50th Army basically remained unchanged. According to front directive No. 0104 / op of December 13, the army, in cooperation with the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, was to continue the offensive in the direction of Shchekino, with the goal of destroying the enemy's Tula grouping and by the end of December 15, the main forces would reach the line Plastovo,

Zhitovo. On the afternoon of December 14 and during December 15 and 16, the combat events on the front of the 50th Army developed mainly in two directions - western and southern, on the outskirts of Shchekin. Units of the 258th Rifle Division, having broken the resistance of the Germans on the Upa River, in the Pavshino area, reached the line of Berezovo, Krasnaya Zarya, Ivanovka by 11 o'clock on December 16 (all points 10 km southwest of Pavshino), having captured these points.

In the following days, the division's offensive developed according to the new plan of the army command in a northwestern direction. By December 16, the 290th Rifle Division concentrated its main forces in the Verigino, Voskresenskoye area, being in readiness to carry out new army tasks. The 217th Rifle Division with the 32nd Tank Brigade, advancing from the Vorobyovka, Baburino, Yassenki area

(all points north of Shchekino 3 km), fought for Shchekino. Units of the enemy's 296th infantry division with a large number of automatic weapons and mortars, occupying prepared positions in the Shchekino area, offered stubborn resistance. The 154th Rifle Division advanced from the line of Smirnoe, Panarino (both points 1–2 km northwest of Lomintsevo), Lomintsevo in the direction of Shevelevka (4 km east of Shchekino). By December 17, the

154th Rifle Division was withdrawn from combat and concentrated 5 km southwest of Tula (in the area of Tatyevoye, Khyupilovo, Dementyevoye) to carry out new tasks for the army. The 413th Rifle Division, from the line occupied by it on December 14 (Podosinki, Zamyatino, Krutoye), attacked Kosov, Shchekino (both points 3 km south west of Lomintsev), where they met stubborn resistance from the Germans, who, with a force of up to two infantry battalions with 15 tanks occupied positions prepared in advance for defense. Thus, the center of

combat events on the front of the 50th Army during December 15-16 was the area of the Shchekino station, which the enemy tried to hold in order to ensure the withdrawal of his troops.

On the morning of December 15, in accordance with the instructions of the front, which required the main forces of the army to turn to the north-western direction, the command of the 50th Army set new tasks for its troops. According to army order No. 39 / op dated December 15, the right flank and center were to assist the 49th army in destroying the enemy Aleksin grouping, and the left flank and partially the center of the army (413th and 217th rifle divisions) were to cooperate with the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, complete the defeat of the enemy grouping in the Shchekino, Zhitovo area, after which these divisions turned to the west. The 31st Cavalry Division provided the left flank of the army, acting in conjunction with the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps. In the order of the army, the lines were indicated to the divisions

and the dates for their passage were outlined. Scheme 14 shows what the operational formation of the army should have been like when it was regrouped to the western and northwestern directions. The concessive nature of this formation was due to two reasons: firstly, the need to put an end to the Shchekino-Zhitovskaya enemy grouping and, secondly, the lagging behind of the neighbor on the left - the 10th Army, which required provision

the left flank of the army from the Likhvin-Cherepetskaya enemy grouping. During the

second half of the day on December 16, the army divisions, following the order, advanced in the southern and south-western directions. The 258th Rifle Division met the strongest enemy resistance in the Andreevskoye area (7 km northwest of Pavshin) and retreated with its right flank to Pavshin. The 290th Rifle Division continued to fight with one regiment for Suprut. The 217th Rifle Division continued to fight for Shchekino, where the 154th Rifle Division advanced from Shevelevka (4 km east of Shchekino station) with two regiments. The 413th Rifle Division continued to fight at the same line. By the end of December 17, the 50th Army, having captured the 217th Rifle Division Shchekin, went to the front west of Plastov, Guryevka, Suprut, Shchekin. During the night of December 18, units of the

army brought themselves into order and were preparing for a further offensive.

In the following days, the 50th Army launched an offensive in the Kaluga direction, where some of its units were already fighting by that time.

Combat events on the front of the group of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps of General Belov, adjacent to the left, developed as follows. According to the

directive of the front commander, General of the Army Zhukov, No. 0106 / op dated December 13, the group was to, in cooperation with the 50th and 10th armies, destroy the enemy in the area of Dedilovo, Shchekino, Bogoroditsk (excl.) and by the end of December 16 concentrate in the area Krapivna, Danilovka (10 km south of Krapivna). Based on

the instructions of the front, General Belov built a group its parts as follows:

a) on the right flank from the line of Lipnya, Berezovka (3 km southeast of Lipnya), the 322nd Rifle Division was advancing in a southwestern

direction; b) in the center, in the direction of Dedilovo, the 1st Guards Cavalry Division developed a strike;

c) on the left flank, part of the forces fought for the Uzlovaya station, the 2nd Guards Cavalry Division with the 9th Tank Brigade, advancing

the rest of the units in a westerly direction in cooperation with the 1st Guards Cavalry Division. At dawn on

December 14, the 2nd Guards Cavalry Division, after a stubborn battle, captured Uzlovaya and began pursuing the Germans in a westerly direction. One cavalry regiment was sent with tanks to intercept the Tula-Orel highway in the Zhitovo region.

However, this task could not be completed immediately due to enemy resistance. On the morning

of December 15, the 1st Cavalry Division fought Dedilovo. The 322nd Rifle Division, having captured Bykovo, developed an offensive in the direction of Plekhanovo (15 km northwest of Dedilov). The offensive of the cavalry

group continued with short breaks and at night. On the morning of December 16, the cavalry group reached the Upa River in the Dubrovka sector (2 km north of Mount Uslan), Kurovo, Smirnovka. In the Kurov area, units of the 1st Guards Cavalry Division met strong resistance from the 399th Infantry Regiment of the enemy, with whom they fought.

On December 17, the front commander, by directive No. 7989, set the cavalry corps the task of reaching the Krapivna, Arkhangelskoye, Umchino area by the end of December 18. The directive of the front essentially repeated to the corps the task set the day before in directive No. 112/op.

On the same day, General Belov reported to General Zhukov about his decision to start moving to the indicated area on the night of December 18, basically leaving the grouping of his units unchanged.

It was established by reconnaissance and combat that the remnants of units of the 167th Infantry, 17th Panzer Divisions and, apparently, the 10th Motorized Division, retreated in front

of the corps front. On the night of December 18, units of the cavalry group began advancing to the indicated area and by the morning of December 18 they reached

the front of Zhitovo, Sorochinka (excl.). Thus, in the fighting on the front of the 50th Army for the period from December 13 to 17, the following points can be noted. Firstly, the task of defeating the Shchekino-Zhitov grouping of the enemy, who sought to retain the Shchekino, Zhitovo region and thereby cover the Tula-Zhitovo highway, was basically successfully

Eagle. Secondly, even in the process of completing the Tula operation, it began to develop into a new Kaluga operation of the 50th Army, which was reflected in the regrouping of the army from the Shchekino (southern) direction to the northwestern direction. For

the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps and the 10th Army during this period, there were still some tasks to complete the Tula offensive operation, and subsequently it was necessary to start a new Belevsko-Kozelsk operation, moreover, the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, operating at the junction of 10- The 1st and 50th armies, as we shall see below, also took some part in the Kaluga operation.

The development of the 10th Army offensive in the Bogoroditsko-Plavsk direction until reaching the line of the Plava and Upa rivers

and the occupation of Plavsk Front Directive No. in the direction of Bogoroditsk, Plavsk, Arsenyevo (35 km west of Plavsk), in cooperation with the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, by the end of December 16, destroy the enemy in the area of Uzlovaya, Bogoroditsk, Plavsk and go with the main forces to the line Zhitovo station, Plavsk. The left border of the army remained unchanged. As can be seen from the directive, the strike of the main forces of the army

was aimed in a south-western direction with the aim of deeper coverage of the enemy grouping, located north of the Bogoroditsk parallel. On the morning of December 14, the troops of the 10th Army resumed the offensive and by the end of the same day reached the

front: the 330th and 328th rifle divisions crossed the Uzlovaya railway, Bogoroditsk in the Bibikovo sector (2 km south of Uzlovaya), Dens and attacked in a westerly direction. The 324th Rifle Division fought against units of the 112th Infantry and 10th Motorized Divisions on the outskirts of Bogoroditsk. On the morning of December 15, the division captured Bogoroditsky and developed success in a westerly direction. To the left of the 324th Rifle Division, in the Bogoroditsk, Tovarkovo sector, the 323rd Rifle Division advanced with fighting. The 326th Infantry Division was advancing behind it with a ledge. The offensive of the latter was delayed by the resistance of the German fascist infantry from the area of Kaganovich, Mokhovoe. 325th Rifle

By this time, the division was only concentrating in the Epifan region and to the south with the task of reaching the Kaganovich region by the morning of December 16.

The three cavalry divisions that were part of the army, in fact, acting separately from one another, moved in a southwestern direction. The 41st Cavalry Division, bypassing Bogoroditsk from the south, advanced on Plavsk with the task of capturing it. The 57th and 75th Cavalry Divisions were only concentrating in the Star area. Gate, Matveevka (11 km south of Epifan). This situation forced the army command to combine (December 17) all three cavalry divisions into one group under the command of General Mishulin. The group operated on the left flank of the army, at the junction with the Southwestern Front and had the task of advancing in the direction of Plavsk. This measure should be considered expedient, but in the general course of events on the front of the 10th Army, it did not give particularly great results.

In the following days until December 19, the offensive of the 10th Army developed as follows. By the end of December 17, units of the 321st Rifle Division crossed the Upa River in the Naumovka-Myasnovka sector, and the 323rd Rifle Division reached Rzhava with its advanced units. By that time, the 326th Rifle Division had passed the Dry Creek. Cavalry divisions, somewhat behind, were still on the left flank of the army, moving to Plavsk and south.

The enemy grouping in front of the army front basically remained unchanged. The 167th and 112th infantry, 29th and 10th motorized divisions of the Nazi troops, resisting, retreated to Plavsk, Odoevo. The retreat was covered by strong fire from 150-mm batteries.

By the end of December 19, the 323rd Rifle Division with its main forces (two regiments) captured Plavsk in battle and developed an attack in a northwestern direction. During December 18, General Mishulin's cavalry group fought in the Teploe region (10 km southeast of Plavsk), where they tried to surround the enemy. By this time, the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, adjacent to the right, occupied the Prishnya, Star line. Krapivenka, Stary Khutor (6 km south of Star. Krapivenka) and, interacting with the right flank of the army, moved to the Plava River.

With the release of units of the 10th Army and the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps to the Plavsk meridian and the line of the Plav River, the second stage of the Tula operation should be considered completed for both the 10th Army and the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps. Subsequent military operations on the left wing of the front are divided into a number of separate, successive operations - the offensive of the 49th Army on Vysokinichi, as well as the Kaluga and Belevsko-Kozelsk operations.

In the considered combat operations on the front of the 10th Army in the second stage of the Tula operation, the following can be noted moments.

Firstly, the army's offensive was actually reduced to frontal frontal strikes without attempts to bypass and cover a number of enemy resistance nodes. This circumstance forced the front command to repeatedly point out to the army command (as well as to the command of other armies) the need for more decisive action, with the widespread use of detours and envelopments, using the gaps between the nodes of resistance, especially not penetrated by enemy fire. Secondly, despite the fact that the overall rate of advance of the 10th Army on

average during the entire operation was over 12 km per day (significantly higher than in the 50th and 49th armies), according to the plan of the front command, which set the task of encircling the main forces of the 2nd Panzer Army, this pace had to be increased. The 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, which operated at the junction of both armies, unfortunately, was also unable to develop a faster rate of attack at this stage, mainly due to the resistance offered to it by the enemy at a number of lines. Because of this, the front command was forced to note in directive No. 0102 / op dated December 13 that ***“the 10th army, by its passivity and systematic failure to comply with orders to occupy front lines and objects in front, frustrates the***

front's operation plan and enables the enemy to withdraw their units and equipment ...” [88]

In addition, the front command demanded that the army command provide the Headquarters with an explanation of the reasons for the slow

advance rates. Thirdly, the unification of three cavalry divisions into one group was undoubtedly correct in principle, but due to the different combat and technical equipment (the 57th and 75th cavalry divisions were especially poorly armed), the mobile group did not play any significant role and subsequently was disbanded, and its divisions were transferred to the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps.

General conclusion and conclusions on the Tula offensive

Operations The role and significance of the Tula offensive operation in the overall operation of

the Western Front The operation of the troops of the left wing of the Western Front that we have considered was deployed in one of the important operational directions of the front - Tula - and in its scope was an operation of an army group connected by the unity of the operational plan and purpose of action. During the hostilities, the left flank of the 49th Army took part, which, in cooperation with the right flank of the 50th Army, carried out the task of defeating the enemy Aleksin grouping.

The overhang of this grouping from the northwest over Tula posed a threat to the right flank of the 50th Army and could prevent the development of its offensive in a direction south of Tula. Therefore, the front command paid great attention to the struggle in the Aleksin direction. The main forces of the 50th Army, the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps and the 10th Army fought to destroy the enemy's 2nd Tank Army, which also included a number of infantry divisions (112th, 167th, 296th and, apparently, the 31st and 131st divisions of the 43rd Army Corps). The defeat of these troops of the fascist German army on the Tula bridgehead acquired exceptionally great importance in the battle for Moscow, being part of the general defeat of the enemy troops by the armies of the Western Front and their successful movement to the west.

Despite some shortcomings in the operation, noted by us, this task was generally completed successfully. For the armies of the left wing, the way was opened for solving a new big task of the front - in cooperation with the center and the right wing.

front to defeat the central grouping of Nazi troops.

Peculiarities of the Tula

operation One of the peculiarities of the Tula offensive operation was that it grew directly out of the operational defense, which had previously been carried out by the troops of the Tula direction.

Thus, even in the first stage of the operation, the 49th Army was actively defending on its right flank and in the center, and the extreme right flank of the army was also defending in the second stage. On the left flank, against the Aleksinsky bridgehead (in cooperation with the right flank of the 50th Army), active offensive operations were carried out in the interests of the operation as a whole. Here, there was no pause between the defensive actions that had previously been carried out in this sector and the offensive; one operational

action followed from another. We see an almost similar picture on the front of the 50th Army, which, in the period preceding the operation, had to withstand the blows of large forces of the right wing of the Nazi troops advancing in the direction of Moscow. Thanks to the measures taken by the Headquarters and the front, the resistance force constantly grew during the course of the defense, which made it possible for the 50th Army in the general group of armies of the left wing to go over to the offensive at the right moment. As for the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, which was one of the most important links in our counterattack in the Tula direction, even before switching to a general offensive, it developed active operations, starting on November 27 from the Kashira region. With its strike, the 1st Cavalry Corps made it possible to avoid the premature entry of the 10th Army until the end of its operational concentration and deployment.

Thus, even during the defensive operation in the Tula direction, an offensive began in one of its sectors, which was the forerunner of the future general offensive of the left wing of the front, and with it the entire Western Front.

Introduced from the strategic reserve of the Headquarters, the 10th Army entered the operation in a different way. Its offensive was preceded by a period of operational concentration and deployment, followed by a period of preparatory measures and planning (outside contact

with the enemy!), which were not fully completed before the start of the operation.

During the combat events in the Tula operation, a need arose for a number of private regroupings in accordance with the conditions of the situation and the operational plan of the command. The reassignment of the 340th and 173rd Rifle Divisions of the 49th Army was necessary in order to quickly defeat the enemy Aleksin grouping. The subordination of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps of rifle divisions was also caused by the conditions of the situation, which required reinforcement of the cavalry by infantry, since in most cases the corps had to fight in dismounted formation, and the horse served as a means of speedy maneuvering. And, finally, the most striking example of a regrouping carried out directly in the course of hostilities was the regrouping of the 50th Army with a turn to a new operational direction. In the description of the operation, we paid sufficient attention to this issue and explained the reasons for the turn of the 50th Army from the southwest to the northwest. Let's briefly summarize. Firstly, the originality of the Tula offensive operation was that it grew directly out of the defensive operation, without a significant time interval. Secondly, in the general course of the offensive on a broad front, defense was still being carried out in its individual sections. Thirdly, during the offensive, private regroupings

were carried out, which found the most striking expression in the regrouping of the 50th Army, which was due to the maneuverable nature of the hostilities on a wide front and the complexity of the tasks facing the troops of the left wing of the Western Front.

The scope of the operation and its

depth. The pace of the offensive, issues of interaction between troops, command and control

connection

The overall scope of the operation along the front and in depth is expressed in the figures that we cited when describing the area of military operations, i.e., about 110 km in the direction from north to south and about 130 km in the direction from east to west. In terms of time, the operation took 10–12 days, during which

hostilities were conducted almost continuously. The pace of the advance of the armies was

various. So, for the right flank and center of the 49th Army, it was no more than 1 km per day for the entire operation as a whole. In the second stage of the operation, however, this figure rises, while the offensive reaches 3–4 km per day (taking into account deviations of divisions from the indicated direction in order to bypass and envelop individual enemy strongholds). Parts of the left flank, overcoming the resistance of the enemy on the Aleksinsky bridgehead, advanced basically at the same pace. If we take the regrouping of the 340th and 173rd rifle divisions in this direction (taking into account the presence of these divisions on the way), then the rate of advance reached 6–8 km per day.

The advance of the 50th Army (taking into account its regrouping to the northwestern direction) for 10 days of the operation was 25–30 km, which averages 2.5–3 km per day. The total advance of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps was 100–120 km, or 8–10 km per day. Nevertheless, the 10th Army had the fastest

offensive: it fluctuated within 12–13 km per day. The issues of interaction in the Tula operation, as operations of

several armies, were of exceptionally great importance. The main thing here was the setting of tasks for the armies by the front command, aimed at achieving one goal. So, in the Aleksinsky direction, the decisive factor in this matter was the interaction of the left flank of the 49th Army with the right flank of the 50th Army, which the front command repeatedly pointed out. On the Shchekino and Stalinogorsk directions, this interaction was achieved by targeting the front of the 50th Army in the southern and southeastern directions, the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps in the southwestern direction, and the 10th Army in the western and southwestern directions. Apparently, there was also an agreement between the commanders of the armies among themselves on additional issues that arose, as one of the forms of interaction.

An important role was played by the instructions of the front command about the approach of the command post of the army commander to a distance of 10–15 km from the front line, and the location of the army headquarters - no further than 25–30 km, which greatly facilitated command and control. It should be noted that the headquarters of the armies basically coped with this task, with the exception of the cases that we have already mentioned.

This maneuvering operation also revealed the difficulties experienced by the army command, which has up to ten military formations or more under direct control (the 10th Army had eleven divisions). Therefore, for example, the command of the 10th Army subsequently raised the question of the need for permanent or temporary consolidation of individual divisions into groups or corps.

Development of the offensive on Vysokinichi, Kaluga and

Belev By December 18, the armies of the left wing of the Western Front, continuing to fight with the enemy, were at the following lines. The 49th Army, defending on its right flank, center and left flank from the Troitskoye line, west of Tarusa and Aleksin, continued the offensive in the direction of Vysokinichi and Petrishchevo. The 50th Army advanced from the Vysokoye, Dubna, Voskresenskoye line in the northwestern and western directions. The group of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps and the 10th Army, developing the offensive in a westerly direction, went to the Prishnia-Star line. Krapivenka, river Plav, Plavsk and south.

With the Tula operation, the offensive of the armies of the left wing did not actually stop. In accordance with the general operational plan of the front command, this offensive continued and, developing in the northwestern and western directions, led to the offensive of the 49th Army on Vysokinichi and Nedelnoye, the 50th Army on Kaluga, the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps and the 10th th army to Belev and Kozelsk.

Development of the offensive of the 49th Army in the direction of Vysokinichi

and Nedelnoye the Vysokinichi region, from Tarusa to Nedelnoye, from Aleksin to Kaluga and to the area 30–40 km southwest of Aleksin (Makarov, Stolbova, Titovo, Pozdnyakovo). Intelligence data noted the following grouping of enemy troops: on the front from Burinov to Tarusa, units 263, 137 and 268

infantry divisions, as well as individual units of the 260th Infantry Division (whose main forces during this period were apparently located in the Vysokinichi area). From Tarusa to Aleksin, units of the 52nd Infantry Division were fixed. In the Aleksinsky direction, units of the 31st and 131st Infantry Divisions of the 43rd Army Corps retreated with fighting. On the northern bank of the Protva River,

the enemy continued to hold the occupied line from Ostrov (2 km west of Troitsky) to Vorontsovka and further to Burinov. Due to the wooded nature of the terrain and the stubborn defense of the Germans, the offensive of the right flank of the army was not successful. Basically, the successful resolution of the tasks by the shock group of the 49th Army and the liquidation of the Aleksinsky bridgehead of the enemy by units of the left flank during the Tula operation required the setting of new tasks for the troops of the army in order to develop its further offensive. On the night of December 19, the chief of staff

of the front was instructed: in connection with the successful advance of the strike group, the front commander ordered part of the forces of the 5th guards and 60th rifle divisions to castle south of the Protva River in order to strengthen the right flank of the strike group for the fastest exit to the rear of the Vysokinichskaya enemy grouping. In development of this front directive, the commander of the 49th Army,

General Zakharkin, on the same day issued order No. 018 / op, according to which

“The 49th army, part of the forces (415th and 5th guards divisions), holding down the enemy in the Burinovo, Maleev sector (east. Vorontsovka 2 km), continues the offensive with the rest of the formations with the task of completing the liquidation of the Vysokinichskaya and Aleksinskaya enemy groupings and advanced mobile detachments to At the end of December 19, 1941, reach the Chernaya Gryaz, Nedelnoye, Stepanovskoye, Fetinino, Akhlebnino line.

In accordance with this, the 415th Rifle and 5th Guards Divisions were to pin down the enemy by active actions of separate detachments, preventing the transfer of his reserves in a southerly direction. Subsequently, the 5th Guards Division was withdrawn to the reserve north of Tarusa. The 60th Rifle Division received the task: to

By the end of December 19, take possession of Vysokinichi. The 194th Infantry Division was to operate in the direction of Gosteshevo, Nov. Slobodka, bypassing Vysokinichi from the south, and by the end of December 19, capture Nikonov and Karpov with the main forces, and occupy Nov. Slobidka. To the left of the line Lopatino, Filippovka, the 26th Infantry Brigade was aiming with the task of December 19 to occupy both points with forward detachments, and with the main forces to reach the Volynsky region (3 km southwest of Vysokinichi).

The 133rd Rifle Division and the 30th Rifle Brigade, located to its left, received the task: by the end of December 19, move mobile detachments to the Filippovka, Nedelnoye, Kudinovo line, and capture the Altukhovo, Durovo, Pozdnyakovo line with the main forces. The 19th Rifle Brigade, having destroyed the enemy southwest of Tarusa, was to concentrate in the area of Isakovo, Latynino, and Kresta by the end of the day. The left-flank 238th and

173rd Rifle Divisions by the same time, advancing in a northwestern direction, were supposed to reach the line of Latynino, Bogorodskoye, Elkino with the main forces. The 340th Rifle Division, upon reaching the Ferzikovo area, was transferred to the 50th Army. The command post of the army headquarters continued to remain in Buturlin.

As can be seen from the above, the general task of the 49th Army was the concentric envelopment of the enemy grouping in the Vysokinichi area by units of the right flank (excluding the 415th Infantry Division) and striking the divisions of the left flank in a northwestern direction. During the second half of the day on December 19, the army troops had to overcome the resistance of the enemy and pass through the forests from 10 to 20 km (the latter for the forward detachments). The material and technical

security of the army by December 18: rifle cartridges - 1.4 ammunition, artillery shells of all calibers - 1.5 ammunition, mines - 1 ammunition, fuel - 1.5 refueling, food - 3.5 daily dachas plus stocks of field warehouses . Consequently, the army was satisfied with ammunition, fuel and food. In addition, the presence of the Moscow-Serpukhov highway in the zone of operations of the 49th Army ensured the supply of

and base command. The basing of the rear of the army remained the same as by December

7th. The offensive of the units of the 49th Army from December 19 unfolded as follows. On the morning of December 19, units of the 415th, 5th Guards and 60th Rifle Divisions continued to fight at the line of Burinovo, Voronino, Maleeva, Borovka (4 km southeast of Vorontsovka), encountering strong opposition from the Nazis, who relied on a developed system of forest defense. The 194th Infantry Division was advancing on Gosteshevo. In the Troitskoye area, a large part of the enemy, apparently belonging to the 268th Infantry Division, was defeated. By the end of the day on December 19 and all day on December 20, the division fought for the Island, surrounding it from the north and south. The enemy offered stubborn resistance, relying on knots prepared

in advance for defense. The 133rd Rifle Division and the 26th Infantry Brigade continued to fight for the capture of the Radenka line (2 km north of Lgov), Lgov. Having blocked the latter, our units (one rifle regiment) advanced on Titovo (2 km west of Lgov). The 30th Infantry Brigade advanced on Boltanogovo (4 km southwest of Lgov). The 19th Rifle Brigade was advancing to the indicated area.

The 238th Rifle Division, meeting strong resistance from the Nazi units, advanced with great difficulty to the line indicated by the order of the army. Only by the end of the day on December 20, the division captured Petrishchev and continued the offensive on Kareevo. Only by the morning of December 21 did the 173rd Rifle Division reach the area of Semeikino, Bogimovo (both 8 km southwest of Petrishchev), having captured these

points. During December 20-22, the troops of the 49th Army, following the order of the army commander of December 19, fought in the following areas: the 415th Rifle Division and two regiments of the 60th Rifle Division defended at the Burinovsky junction line (3 km south of Burinov) , forest north of the Island. The 5th Guards Rifle Division was withdrawn to the army reserve, to the area of Saltykovo, Bolsunovo (both points 6–8 km north of Tarusa). The 194th Rifle Division continued to fight unsuccessfully for Ostrov, Galchatovka (1 km south of Ostrov). The 133rd division, the 26th and 30th rifle brigades continued to fight for the capture of the line of fortified points of Radenki, Lgovo,

Boltanogovo. The 34th rifle brigade, withdrawn from the army reserve, fought in the area of Lytkino, Khomyakovo. The 238th Rifle Division with its main forces crossed the line of the Tarusa River in the Pimenovo, Lotrevo sector (both points 10–12 km northwest of Petrishchev), advancing in the direction of Nedelnoye. The 173rd Rifle Division, after a night battle, reached the area of Lobanovo, Kamenka, Maksimovo by the morning of

December 23. According to intelligence data, by December 25, enemy troops were operating on the following lines: 137th Infantry Division - Semkino, Vorontsovka; 268th Infantry Division - Maleeva, Ostrov; 260th Infantry Division - Ostrov, Radenki, Lgovo, Zavorovo; 52nd Infantry Division - Zavorovo, Khomyakovo, Crosses, Shulgino and further parts of the 131st and 31st Infantry Divisions.

As a result of the battles from December 19 to 23, it turned out that it would not be possible to reach the planned lines by the deadline indicated by order No. 018 due to strong enemy resistance. Under these conditions, on December 22, the army command makes a new decision, the essence of which is as follows. The enemy, relying on a system of strong strongholds, holds his positions on the right flank and in the center of the army. On the left flank of the army, the Germans, defeated by our units in the Aleksin area, continue to withdraw in the western and northwestern directions. It is necessary, after pinning down the enemy on the extreme right flank of the army, to encircle and destroy the Germans in the Vysokinichi area with parts of the center. At the same time, it is necessary to develop a strike by units of the left flank of the army in the direction of Detchino, with the task of cutting off the enemy's

escape routes to the west and northwest. Thus, the decision of the commander of the 49th Army was based on the idea of encircling the Germans directly in the Vysokinichi region and enveloping them in depth in the direction

This decision of the army command corresponded to the situation. Despite the somewhat protracted battles against the Vysokinichskaya enemy grouping, the outcome of this struggle was clear. The task of defeating the Vysokinichskaya group of Germans was to be solved by parts of the center of the army. The exit of the 50th Army to Kaluga and the ensuing battles for it testified to the chainedness of the enemy to this area, and, consequently, to the operational security of the left flank of the 49th Army. All this gave the command of the 49th Army the right to aim its left-flank divisions much deeper than it was planned by Order No. the Detchino area made it easier for the 50th Army to defeat the Kaluga group of Germans.

According to this decision of the army commander, on December 22, army order No. 019 / op was issued, according to which the 415th rifle division was to, conducting combat reconnaissance in the direction of Vysokinichi, firmly defend the occupied line. The 60th, 194th, 133rd rifle divisions and the 26th and 30th rifle brigades were to continue to carry out the tasks set by order No. 018. The 34th rifle brigade was to develop from the area 8 km west of Tarusa

offensive in a northwestern direction and by the end of December 23, reach the Andreevskoye, Antonovo, Lopatino area (all points 8 km west of Vysokinichi), from where turn to Vysokinichi for a joint attack with a group of units advancing from the east.

The 19th Rifle Brigade was given the task of developing an offensive on Nedelnoye, from where to operate in the direction of Lopatino, helping to encircle the Vysokinichsky enemy grouping.

The 238th and 173rd Rifle Divisions, continuing the pursuit of the enemy, by the end of December 23, were to reach the Afanasevo, Detchino, and Torbeevo fronts with their main

forces. The 5th Guards Rifle Division, as was said, was withdrawn to the army reserve north of Tarusa, from where it was supposed to operate, depending on the situation, either with a group of units from the center of the army or with a strike group (238th and 173rd rifle divisions) the left flank of the army. Subsequently, the 5th Guards Rifle Division was thrown to the left flank of the army in order to develop its offensive. In accordance

with repeated instructions from the front, the army command in its order demanded that commanders at all levels avoid frontal attacks on enemy fortified points and try to bypass these points. It was ordered to use mobile detachments more resolutely to throw them on the path of the enemy's withdrawal in order to encircle and destroy his manpower. These instructions were necessary because in a number of cases there were frontal attacks, in addition, indecision and slowness were manifested in the use of skiers and other mobile units. In the period from December 23 to 27, events on the front of the 49th Army

developed in the following way.

The 415th Rifle Division defended on the occupied line until December 24th. On December 24, the division switched from defense to offensive and, acting in separate detachments, slowly moved forward. Enemy resistance in the division's sector begins to weaken. Developing the offensive, units of the 415th Rifle Division in the first half of December 26 approached the line of Kurkino (2 km north of Trojanov), Trojanovo, Makarovo, where they again met stubborn resistance from the Germans. Having mastered the afternoon 28

December Makarov, the division led the offensive in a westerly direction. Parts of the

60th Infantry Division, slowly moving forward with fighting, on December 25 reached the Verkh. and Nizhn. Vyazovnya (4 km east of Vysokinichi) and occupied the indicated points. On the afternoon of December 26, the 60th Infantry Division engaged the enemy on the outskirts of Vysokinichi. Bypassing Vysokinichi from the north and northeast, by the morning of December 27, after a stubborn battle, the division occupied them and began to develop an offensive in a westerly direction. **The 194th Rifle Division**, having passed the forest area south of Vysokinichi, on December 27 developed an offensive in the direction of Ivanovskoye (3 km west of Vysokinichi). In front of the division's front, small enemy units covering the retreat acted.

By the same time, **the 133rd Rifle Division** had captured Stekhin and Utkin (5 km southwest of Vysokinichi) and was advancing in the direction of Antonovo (6 km west of

Vysokinichi). **The 30th Rifle Brigade**, after capturing the area of Boltanogovo, Zavorovo (3 km northwest of Tarusa), was withdrawn to the second echelon behind the 238th Rifle Division.

Parts of the 238th Infantry Division, successfully advancing in the indicated direction, on December 24 approached the line of Nedelnoye, Bashmakovka, where stubborn battles began again.

By this time, **the 173rd Rifle Division** was only approaching Maslov, slowly moving forward. The front command, taking into account the advanced position of the 238th rifle division, on December 24 demanded that the army command immediately withdraw the 173rd rifle division and the 19th rifle brigade to the line of the 238th rifle division.

The 5th Guards Rifle Division with **the 23rd Tank Brigade**, after a difficult march in snowdrifts, on bad roads, concentrated in the Petrishchevo area by the end of December 24 with the task of following to the Nedelnoye area on the morning of December 25, where it was supposed to form the second echelon strike group (173rd and 238th rifle divisions). During

December 25–27, the main battles on the left flank of the 49th Army unfolded in the Nedelnoye area. Holding this area, the enemy,

apparently considered it the key to the Maloyaroslavets-Kaluga railway and to the line of strongholds along this road from Afanasevo to Detchino and Torbeevo. The

possibilities of bypassing Nedelnoye and Bashmakovka were not fully used by the command of the army and divisions, which was one of the reasons for some of our units marking time under Nedelnoye. In the morning of December 26, the 173rd Rifle Division reached the Bol. Luga, Pnevno-Rakhmanovo (southeast of the Detchino, Torbeevo line 4 km), but due to a strong enemy counterattack and intense fire, withdrew its right flank to Dolsky (7 km southeast of Detchino).

As a result of the fighting on the front of the 49th Army during the period from December 19 to 27, the following can be noted: firstly, the units of the right flank and center successfully completed the task of capturing the Vysokinichi region; secondly, a new center of stubborn enemy defense appeared in the area of Nedelnoye, Bashmakovka, which the fascist German units sought to hold in order to prevent our units from reaching the Maloyaroslavets-Kaluga railway line; thirdly, the offensive took place in bad weather conditions (snow drifts) and in a wooded area, which slowed down the pace of the offensive.

In the period following December 27, the 49th Army advances in the direction of Detchino, Kondrovo and to the west, with the task of defeating and destroying (in cooperation with the 43rd and 50th armies) the Myatlyo Kondrovo-Yukhnov group of Germans. The new operation of the 49th Army was to carry out this task.

Kaluga operation of the 50th

army. The situation on the front of the 50th Army and its

neighbors at the start of the operation While the 10th Army and a group of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps were reaching the line of Prishnia, Star. Krapivenka, the Plava River, Plavsk and to the south, parts of the right flank of the 50th Army advanced in the western and northwestern d

On December 18, the 258th Rifle Division occupied Vysokoye with its center, with the right flank fought for Khovanskaya (4 km southeast of Titov), and with the left flank for Lobzha. German resistance

fascist units in the area of these points continued to increase. The 290th Rifle Division,

leaving one regiment to occupy Krapivna, by this time had reached the Drokovo-Biketovka line (6 km south of Drovok). The rest of the army continued to regroup. The 340th

and 173rd Rifle Divisions of the 49th Army, neighboring on the right, were located on the western bank of the Oka River in the Aleksin area, from where they developed an offensive in the northwestern (173rd Rifle Division) and western (340th Rifle Division) directions. The enemy grouping in the Kaluga direction by December 18 was the following. The area of

Zabelino, Titovo, Stolbova, Makarovo was defended by the 31st Infantry Division. Separate

units of the 296th Infantry Division were also fixed here. The remnants of the 131st and 137th Infantry Divisions, as well as other units transferred from the rear and from other sectors of the front, were concentrated in Kaluga.

In the Odoev area and to the north-west of it, near Likhvin and Cherepet, units of the 296th and 167th infantry divisions operated.

In the second line were units of the 19th Panzer Division and the SS Regiment Grossdeutschland, which suffered serious losses.

Plans of the sides for the beginning

of the operation As can be seen from the enemy grouping, the German command sought to withdraw its units from the blow of the Soviet troops, to delay our offensive on the outskirts of Kaluga and further on the line of the Oka to Belev and to the south. Under the cover of this line, apparently, it was meant to bring up reserves, make the necessary regroupings and linger for the winter. The formation of groupings in the area of Likhvin, Cherepet and southeast of Kaluga (in the area of Zabelino, Titovo, Stolbov, Makarovo), as well as the construction of fortifications in the area of Kaluga itself, was probably subordinated to the same goal. According to intelligence data [89] it was noted that in Kaluga, the population was mobilized and captured Red Army soldiers were recruited to carry out defensive work around the city. Front Command Directive No. 112 / op dated December 16, 1941, the 50th Army was

tasked: by the end of December 18

the main forces of the army to go to the front of Pozdnyakovo, Stolbova, Drokovo. The dividing line to Odoev remained the same, then to Likhvin (exclusively).

At the same time, the front command ordered the commander of the 50th Army, General Boldin, to form a maneuver group for an attack on Kaluga from the south in cooperation with the 49th Army. In

development of the directives of the front, the command of the 50th Army on the morning of December 17 issued Order No. 40, according to which the army was to continue the offensive in a westerly

direction. Due to the fact that Kaluga was part of the zone of operations of the left flank of the 49th Army, the task of the latter was to capture the city with a strike from east.

In accordance with the orders of the front commander, General Zhukov, the commander of the 50th Army created a mobile group, which, in cooperation with the 49th Army, was to suddenly take Kaluga with a strike from the south. Consequently, the 50th Army was originally supposed to help the 49th Army. However, as we will see later, the course of hostilities led to the fact that the task of capturing Kaluga was solved by the 50th Army independently with indirect interaction with the neighbor on the right - the 49th Army and the neighbor on the left - the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps. The mobile group included two

regiments of the 154th Rifle Division, the 112th Tank Division, two batteries of the guards mortar division and a high-explosive flamethrower company. In addition, on the morning of December 18, the composition of the mobile group was replenished with the 31st cavalry division, the Tula workers' regiment, the 131st tank battalion and other units, and the command of the group was entrusted to the deputy commander of the 50th army, General Popov. According to the order, by the end of the day on December 18, the

mobile group was to secretly concentrate in the forest, in the area of Zyabki, Alekseevskoye, Zelenino, Yurovo (the last three points 5–7 km south west and south of Zyabka), from where a sudden strike at dawn on December 20 capture Kaluga from the south. From the starting area of Zaitsevo, Kharin, Pyatnitskoye, the mobile group was supposed to set out no later than 22:00 on December 17 and move, making night marches along the Zaitsevo, Voskresenskoye-Dubna, Khanino, Zyabki, Muzhach, Kaluga axis.

From the north, the actions of the mobile group of General Popov were provided by the 258th Infantry Division, which, having destroyed the enemy, was supposed to reach the front of Akhlebnino, Zyabki, Pleshkovo on December 20.

From the south-west and from the south, the maneuver of the mobile group was provided by the 290th rifle division, which received the task on December 19 to go to the Khanino area and to the west, throwing forward mobile detachments onto the Oka River, to the participation of Korekozovo, Gerasimov

(5 km north of Cherepet). The tasks of the 217th and 413th rifle divisions remained

basically unchanged. Thus, the created mobile group was given the task of suddenly breaking through the enemy's position and leaving from the south to Kaluga. During the capture of Kaluga, a wedge was driven between the right flank of the 4th German army and the left flank of Guderian's 2nd tank army.

General Popov's group had to overcome a distance of over 80 km, and penetrate into the enemy's position for 40–45 km. The group had to move at a pace of over 30 km per day.

It should be noted that the moment for the actions of this group was well chosen. It coincided in time with the defeat of the enemy grouping in the Tula region and with the exit of the main forces of the armies of the left wing of the front to the west of it. In the conditions of winter and the continued resistance of the enemy, such a decision is instructive, while the successful execution of the planned maneuver by the mobile group testifies to the high combat qualities of the troops of the Western Front and their skillful leadership.

Logistics support of the operation According to

the directive of the front on the rear No. 026 of December 16, the field army depot of the 50th army was deployed in the Tula region. The 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, being supplied by the 50th Army, was mainly provided from the same base. Mobile stocks in the troops were to be replenished to the norm at the request of the army commander by December 20, and the supply of stocks and property from front-line warehouses was to be carried out by rail (and only in exceptional cases by road) to the head army warehouses. way

the redistribution of vehicles among the troops and the use of horse-drawn transport battalions, delivery to the division was to be provided for 60–70 km. On average, **1/4 ammunition**, **1/2** refueling, 1 daily food supply, **1/3 daily** fodder supply were subject **to** transportation for 75 km. According to the

directive of the front No. 027 of December 22, the Kashira-Tula line was established as the rear border of the army. The army base was to be in the Tula region; branch - in Aleksin. Reserves on unpaved areas were ordered to be created in the Krosna area (23 km east of Kaluga) and Makarovo. Delivery route: Tula, Aleshnya, Gryaznovo (7 km southwest of Titov), Makarovo (depending on the advance of the army). To provide for

the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, the army was given 150 vehicles for 5-6 days, 50 of them for fuel. The main highway is Moscow-Serpukhov-Tula. Railway basing was mainly carried out in Tula and due to the supply from Moscow. When the army moved forward, the main railway communication was to be the Tula-Kozelsk road, and the auxiliary one was Tula-Kaluga. The army base in Tula provided the army until its units reached the Kaluga-Kozelsk line, after which it was transferred to Cherepet. Thus, normal transportation and evacuation were ensured. By December 21, a front-line reloading base and an army base of the 50th Army were located at the Khanino

station. There were no storage facilities. The air defense of the Khanino station consisted of one battery. On December 18, the 50th Army had ammunition, fuel and food in stock: mines - 1.5 ammunition, artillery shells of various

calibers - 1-1.5 ammunition, fuel 1.3 refueling, rifle cartridges - 10,275,000 pieces, food - 4 cottages. In addition, in the field army warehouses there were up to 1 ammunition and 1 refueling. Thus, the availability of ammunition, fuel and food ensured the operation.

However, transportation in winter conditions, especially along unpaved roads, was in a number of cases difficult, and this could not but affect the supply of units during their rapid advance.

Aviation support for the operation was basically carried out in the same way as during the Tula operation. The basing of aviation, which served the armies of the left wing with its combat work, remained unchanged. The offensive of the 50th Army was provided by the same air formations as during the Tula operation. It is necessary to note the build-up of air forces at the Sasovsky and Kirsanov airfields. Subsequently, part of the aviation will be relocated to the Tula region, from where it will begin its combat work in January 1942.

The first stage of the operation (December 17–25). Completion of the regrouping of the 50th Army and the offensive in a new operational direction until reaching the line of the Oka River and the outbreak of battles for Kaluga

The offensive of the 50th army after the occupation of the mobile group starting position until its exit to the southern approaches of Kaluga

By the end of December 17, parts of the mobile group concentrated in the starting area indicated by the order of the army and on the night of December 18 set out along the Voskresenskoye, Dubna, Khanino route. Parts of the 154th Infantry Division moved in the first echelon, and the 31st Cavalry and 112th Tank Divisions moved in the second. The night march of the group was carried out covertly, out of contact with the enemy.

By 2 p.m. on December 19, parts of the mobile group, destroying small units of the 296th Infantry Division of the Nazis, entered the forest in the area of Pleshkovo, Lisovo, Butyrka (all points 3–5 km north of Khanin), from where, after a short halt, continued to move towards Kaluga. By 20 o'clock on the same day, the group, using forests for stealth, passed the Mitinka, Alekseevskoye line (10 km northwest of Khanin), aiming at the southern approaches to Kaluga. Continuing to move in the indicated direction, by the end of December 20, the mobile group reached the line of Puchkovo, Nekrasovo, Sekistovo (all points 2 km south of Kaluga) and, under cover of night, began preparing an attack on Kaluga from the south.

Thus, the mobile group traveled about 90 km within three and a half days and basically successfully completed the first part of the task assigned to it - to quickly reach the southern approaches to the city of Kaluga.

However, on the right flank of the army, the fighting events unfolded differently. Units of the 258th Infantry Division, overcoming the stubborn resistance of the enemy's 31st Infantry Division in the Titovo-Lobzha sector, advanced extremely slowly. In the area of Titovo, Stolbov, Gryaznovo, Makarovo, the fascist German units prepared all-round defense in advance, turning settlements and approaches to them into centers of resistance with well-organized mortar and artillery fire. The frontal attacks of these centers of resistance were unsuccessful and led to unnecessary losses. The command of the division resorted to the method of encircling individual centers and blocking them. On the morning of December 21, the 258th Rifle

Division, continuing the battle on its right flank, in the area of Menshikovo, Verkhovoe (3 km northwest of Titovo), surrounded the enemy grouping in the area of Kutkovo (3 km southwest of Titovo), Stolbova with its left flank and center. By the end of December 21, units of the 258th Infantry Division had captured the indicated points and were advancing to the northwest. The fascist German units offered especially stubborn resistance from the Gryaznovo area, holding back the division's offensive, with the support of artillery, mortars and tanks.

By this time, the front command, given the slowdown in the advance of the right flank of the 50th Army, again transferred the 340th Rifle Division to the latter. The division was given the task of assisting the 258th Rifle Division. By the morning of December 21, the 340th Rifle Division had captured the Srednyaya Pushkin station (8 km west of Aleksin) in combat, dropping one regiment to assist the 258th Rifle Division in the direction of Pozdnyakovo.

The 290th Rifle Division, advancing in a westerly direction, with fighting went beyond the line Drokovo, Biketovka (6 km south of Drokovo), throwing out one regiment to occupy Krapivna. By the end of December 18, the division, having broken the resistance of the enemy, captured Butyrki, Bogdanov (both points 3 km northeast of Khanino), Khanino station and began the battle for Khanino, the garrison of which consisted of units of the 248th Infantry Regiment.

In the morning of December 19, units of the division, having driven out the enemy, occupied Khanino and developed an offensive to the northwest of it. Upon exiting the Plevoy, Masalovo, Glubokoe line (5 km

west of Khanin) the 290th Rifle Division was attacked by the enemy from the Likhvin area and temporarily went on the defensive.

The remaining divisions of the army, having completed the regrouping, by December 20 came out: the 217th rifle division to the Zhitnya, Markovo, Andreevka line (all points 4-7 km south of Khanino) in readiness to continue the offensive in a western direction; The 413th Rifle Division, continuing to move in the direction indicated by Army Order No. 39, reached the Sizenevo line, Nikolsky settlements; The 32nd tank brigade, remaining in the reserve of the army commander, was in the Zaitsevo, Pyatnitskoye area. The 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, adjacent to the left, continued to pursue the remnants of the SS

Regiment "Grossdeutschland", the 3rd Panzer and 167th Infantry Divisions of the enemy, by the morning of December 20 captured Krapivna and Arkhangelsk. Subsequently, the corps developed an offensive to the west of these points. Thus, during the offensive of the units of the 50th Army from 17 to 21

December, the following operational-tactical situation was created.

The right flank of the army (340th and 258th rifle divisions) was pinned down by an enemy grouping from the Gryaznovo, Verkhovoe, Stolbov area and slowly moved forward. On the left wing of the army, the 290th

Rifle Division, due to enemy pressure from the Likhvin area, was forced to temporarily go on the defensive. The 217th and 413th rifle divisions were moving on the ledge on the left, behind.

At the same time, operational success was achieved in the center of the army. The mobile group rushed forward from the general front line of the army for 20–25 km and stood on the outskirts of Kaluga. The success of the mobile group, firstly, weakened the strength of the enemy's defense against the right flank of the army and, secondly, had a corresponding effect on their stability at the turn of the Oka River. The subsequent strike of the 1st Guards Cavalry

Corps, which was adjacent to the left, in the direction of Odoev, the capture of the latter on December 22 and the development of the offensive to the Oka River eliminated the threat from Likhvin and Cherepet, influencing the favorable outcome of the Kaluga operation.

The beginning of the battles of the mobile group for Kaluga and the continuation of the offensive of the remaining divisions of the 50th Army

On the morning of December 21, the mobile group of the 50th Army launched an offensive against Kaluga, operating from three directions: from Puchkov, from Nekrasov, and from Sekiotov through Romodanovo (2 km north of Sekiotov). Parts of the 31st Cavalry Division, the 473rd Rifle Regiment of the 154th Division, and tanks of the 112th Panzer Division were the first to break into the city from its southeastern side. The enemy offered stubborn resistance; units of the 20th Panzer

Division, hastily transferred from Mozhaish, took part in the battle. There were also replenished units of the 137th Infantry Division, a motorcycle battalion and other German units. Our troops that broke into the city were soon cut off by the enemy and started street fighting in the encirclement. The fight went on all day; The army headquarters had no data on the results of the battle.

At the front of the remaining divisions of the army, by this time the following combat events were taking place. The 340th Rifle Division, adjacent to the right, continued its offensive in two regiments in a westerly direction, along the northern bank of the Oka River. One regiment, bypassing Dugna from the south, was still advancing in the direction of Pozdnyakov. In the first half of the day on December 23, the 340th Rifle Division with its main forces advanced to the line of Komola, Polivanovo (5 km southeast of Komola), having a left-flank regiment in isolation, on the southern bank of the Oka. The 258th Rifle Division, moving forward with stubborn battles, by 11 o'clock on December 23 bypassed Makarovo from the

northeast. Each settlement had to be taken with a fight.

The 290th Rifle Division, after a temporary defense at the Polevoy, Masalovo, Glubokoye line, went on the offensive on the morning of December 21, throwing forward detachments onto the eastern bank of the Oka River in the Korekozevo, Golodskoye, Dobroe sector. The enemy did not show much activity; a private counterattack of small groups from the side of Cherepet, from the Ushatovo, Ageyev region (4–6 km northeast of Cherepet) was successfully repulsed.

By December 24, the 217th Rifle Division reached the eastern bank of the Oka River, in the Korekozevo, Golodskoye, Mekhovo sector, and was preparing for an attack on Przemyśl. The latter was turned by the enemy

into a strong stronghold and was defended by units of the 137th Infantry Division and units of other units of the Germans.

The 413th Rifle Division fought with one regiment for Odoevo, and with its main forces developed an offensive in the direction of Okorokovo. By the morning of December 21, the division occupied the Govorenki, Novo-Arkhangelsky, Apukhtino line with two regiments (all from 4 to 10 km north and north west of Odoev), occupying the indicated points. With one regiment, the 413th Infantry Division continued the battle for Odoevo. The presence on the left flank of Odoev's division, occupied by the remnants of units of the 112th and 167th infantry divisions of the enemy, fettered its

movement in a westerly direction. In this case, the maneuver of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps of General Belov on Odoevo and the capture of the latter by the end of the day on December 22 was of great importance.[90] The subsequent exit of the corps west of Odoev to the Oka River (south of Likhvin) brought it to the flank of the Likhvin-Cherepetskaya enemy grouping, forcing it to weaken the force of pressure on Khanino. In addition, this maneuver freed the 413th Rifle Division for movement in a westerly direction and made it possible to throw one regiment of the 217th Rifle Division into the Vorotynsk station area for deep coverage of Kaluga from the southwest and west, and to throw the entire 290th Rifle Division in the direction of Pushkino to fight for Kaluga from the southeast. The elimination of the threat to the left flank of the 50th Army made it easier for the 258th Rifle Division to carry out the task of combating the enemy grouping in the Makarovo area and made it possible to send the division to the Romodanovo, Zhelybino area (6 km west of Kalug

Development of the 50th Army units' offensive until

December 25 In the period following December 22, the fighting on the 50th Army front developed in the following sequence. Considering the delay in the advance of the right flank of the army to Kaluga, the front command, in a directive dated December 24, orders the commander of the 50th Army to send the 340th Rifle Division along the Kaluga-Tarus Highway with the task of enveloping Kaluga from the

northeast. In accordance with the new task, the 340th Rifle Division, overcoming enemy resistance with a force of up to two infantry regiments, reinforced with artillery and mortars, within 23-24

December advanced in the western and partly in the north-western directions. By the end of December 25, the division reached the line Zhelyabuzhsky station, Nekrasovo, Ivashevo, Novoloki (all three - from 8 to 16 km south of Zhelyabuzhsky station), having mastered the indicated points.

The 258th Rifle Division continued to fight with one regiment in the Zabelino, Makarovo area; two other regiments of this division followed to the area southwest of Kaluga: one regiment passed Elovka on the morning of December 24, the other regiment passed Chills at noon of the same day. The movement of both regiments took place without serious clashes with the enemy.

Parts of the mobile group of General Popov continued a stubborn street battle in Kaluga. Only during December 22, up to 500 fascist soldiers and officers were destroyed in the city and several enemy planes were shot down. During 23 and 24 December street fighting continued. The remnants of the 131st and 137th [91] infantry divisions of the enemy offered stubborn resistance. During these two days, up to 1900 Nazi soldiers and officers were destroyed. The 437th regiment of the 154th rifle division, making its way to the units cut off in Kaluga, destroyed up to 200 Germans during the capture of the Puchkovo stronghold (2 km south of Kaluga).

Parts of the 290th Rifle Division, having concentrated by the end of December 22 in the area of Koshelevka, Novoselki, Pleshkovo (all points north of Khanin 8–9 km), set out from there on the morning of December 23, with the task of reaching the eastern outskirts of Kaluga to strike at it in cooperation with 340th Rifle Division.

By the morning of December 24, the 290th Rifle Division had captured Akhlebnin and Nikolsk with battle and fought for Pushkino during the day. By the end of the day, the division, having broken the resistance of the Yemtsy, captured Pushkin and advanced to the Turynin area.

During December 24-25, the 217th Infantry Division fought a stubborn battle for Przemyśl, which it captured by the end of December 25. On the night of December 26, this division, pursuing scattered enemy units, advanced in a northwestern direction.

After General Belov's 1st Guards Cavalry Corps captured Odoev, the 413th Rifle Division advanced in the direction of Cherepet and Likhvin, encountering almost no resistance. The remnants of the enemy's 296th infantry and 29th motorized divisions operated in the area of the latter. Defending along the Oka River, the Germans

put up stubborn resistance, trying to keep this frontier behind them. The reconnaissance data noted the transfer of part of the reserves by the enemy to the Przemysl, Likhvin sector in order to delay our offensive. At the same time, the transfer of reinforcements by the enemy to strengthen the Kaluga direction was noted. At the

direction of the army command, the commander of the 413th Infantry Division, avoiding frontal attacks, surrounded Likhvin with two regiments, and the third moved to Gordikovo. After stubborn street fighting, units of the 413th Infantry Division broke the enemy's resistance and occupied Likhvin on December 26. After capturing Likhvin, the 413th Rifle Division developed the offensive in a northwestern direction.

Thus, the fighting on the front of the 50th Army in the second stage of the operation we have considered was deployed mainly in two directions: a) in Kaluga itself and on the approaches to it from the east, southeast and southwest, and b) on the Oka River, on the site Przemysl, Likhvin. Both directions were one for the enemy. The main task of the enemy was to delay our advance on this line. The nature of the actions of the 50th Army, from the

point of view of further planning of the operation, was quite clearly expressed in the bold decision of the army command - to aim the divisions of the left flank (413th and 217th) in the general direction of Uteshevo (36 km west of Kaluga) for deep covering Kaluga from the southwest and west and targeting, according to the instructions of the front command, the 340th Infantry Division around Kaluga from the northeast with the aim of attacking it from this direction. Noteworthy is the struggle for Likhvin by blocking it with units of the 413th Infantry Division and the liquidation by the same method by the 258th Infantry Division of individual enemy strongholds (in the area of Makarovo, Titovo, Stolbov, Gryaznovo). A significant difficulty at this stage was

the management of the mobile group by the army command. From the command post of the army commander (originally deployed in Khanin, and then moving along the axis of Khanino, Elovka, Kaluga), it was not always possible to regularly monitor the course of unfolding military events in order to direct them in the right direction.

The departure of the chief of staff of the army to Kaluga in the midst of hostilities near this city is the right decision, however, on the condition that the necessary personnel be left at the army headquarters to lead the other troops of the army. In the period following December

25, the 50th Army is conducting the second stage of the Kaluga operation, the completion of which coincides with the beginning of a new stage of the front-line operation, in cooperation with the 43rd and 49th Armies and the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, the 50th Army begins to fulfillment of the task of the front to encircle and destroy the enemy's Myatlev-Kondrovo-Yukhnovskaya grouping.

The Belevsko-Kozelskaya operation of the 10th Army and the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps

The situation on the front of the 10th Army and its neighbors at the beginning of the operation After the 10th Army entered the Plav River and captured Plavsk, there were no significant changes in the army grouping. The army troops, continuing to pursue the enemy, by the end of December 20, occupied the following position:

The 328th Rifle Division advanced to the Korenevka, Bulandino sector (13 km southwest of Krapivina), which it reached on December 21;
The

323rd Rifle Division, after capturing Plavskoye, entered its zone of operations in the Krekshino, Volkhonshchino sector, from where it advanced to the Chastye Kolodezi area (6 km west of Krekshino);

The 326th Rifle Division concentrated in the area of Plavsk; **The 239th Rifle Division** was on the march and by the end of 20 December passed the head of its main forces Sorochinka;

The 324th Rifle Division, following in the second echelon of the army, was concentrated in the area of Lyapishchevo, Polozovo, Rzhavo, **and the 330th Rifle Division** - in the area of Ivanovka, Skorodumovo, Spasskoe;

The 41st cavalry division fought for Kamynino on the morning of December 20, where the 57th cavalry division also approached in the afternoon;

The 75th cavalry division by 12 o'clock on December 20 passed Ponomarevo, Urusovo (on the river Plav, 7 km south of Plavsk).

The 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, neighboring on the right, by this time, having passed the line of the Plav River in the Krapivna, Danilovka section,

advanced in a western direction, with the task of capturing Odoev.

The 61st Army of the Southwestern Front, adjacent to the left, advancing in a westerly direction, reached the Teploe line (20 km southeast of Plavsk), Ogarevo, Milyuki, Arkhangelskoye on its right flank, at the junction with the 10th army, the 142nd separate tank battalion, the 91st cavalry and 348th rifle divisions, which fought near Teploe. In front of the front of the 10th Army,

the 10th and 29th motorized divisions and the remnants of the 112th Infantry Division were still operating; here, according to a number of data, were separate units of the 56th Infantry Division. Clinging to intermediate lines, these enemy groups retreated to the west.

Essentially, the plan of the fascist German command remained unchanged. Having been defeated on the lines of Stalinogorsk, Epifan; Dedilovo, Bogoroditsk and Krapivna, Plavsk, the enemy withdrew his troops to the Oka River, trying to gain a foothold on it and stop our offensive. The strongest defensive point on the Oka in front of the front of the 10th Army was the city of Belev, which the enemy tried in every possible way to hold. The desire of the Germans to retain the city of Belev was aimed at keeping the extreme left wing of the Western Front under the threat of a blow to the flank and improving the position of their Kaluga grouping. In addition, Belev covered the Oryol direction from the north and northeast.

Logistic support of the operation Directive of

the front command No. 026 of December 16 ordered to increase the food stocks in army warehouses to 7 dachas, ammunition to 1-1.5 ammunition and fuel and lubricants to 1.5-2 refueling. In what part this directive

was carried out, it was not possible to find out, but judging by the fact that the army was still receiving replenishment of ammunition from December 16 to 20, apparently, there were no special difficulties in this regard, especially in the first period of the operation. In addition, directive No. 027 of December 22 ordered the supplying agencies of the front to deploy branches of their warehouses in the Tula region, which also improved the situation with the supply of the 10th Army. By the beginning of the operation, the army base was deployed in the area of the Uzlovaya station and

Dedilovo, and the head offices of field warehouses - in the area of Yasnaya Polyana

and Shchekino. In order to save fuel, the supply of supplies and property from front-line warehouses was to be carried out by rail to the head offices of field army warehouses. Delivery by road in this link was allowed only with the special permission of the Military Council of the front. Delivery from the

head offices of field army warehouses was ordered to be carried out by divisional transport, for which the army command had to redistribute the vehicles available in the troops with the same calculation for delivery in the divisional level as before the Tula operation. In the 10th Army, it was difficult to fulfill this order, since instead of the required 922 vehicles in the army, by December 25 there were only 507. The weak point in the work of the rear of the army was the lack of workers in the management of the army base and field warehouses, which were staffed by the rear management - which undoubtedly made it difficult to organize and transport.

The first stage of the operation (December 20–26, 1941). The battles for Belev and the attack on Kozelsk *Development of the offensive of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps and the 10th*

Army until reaching the line of the Oka River After the turn of the 50th Army to the western and northwestern directions and the exit of the main The 10th Army on the Plav River had a common task in front of the left wing of the Western Front - rapidly advancing in a westerly direction, to defeat the opposing units of the Nazi troops, depriving them of the opportunity to gain a foothold on intermediate lines and retain the most important nodes of railways and highways and communications .

In particular, in the zone of operations of the 10th Army and the cavalry corps, the most important junctions of highways and railways were Kozelsk, Sukhinichi, Kirov and Lyudinovo. The Sukhinichi railway junction and the Vyazma-Bryansk roadway, on which the Nazi troops relied, acquired especially great operational importance. The rapid exit of the troops of the left wing of the Western Front to these lines of communication and enemy bases was dictated by the entire situation.

With the loss of Sukhinichi, the enemy was deprived of the most important base for his forces, and with the interception of the Vyazma-Bryansk railway by our troops, the operational communication of the two main groupings of Nazi troops operating against the Western and Southwestern Fronts was disrupted. However, the fulfillment of the main task without the liquidation of the Belevsky and Kozelsky centers of German defense would be difficult. The Belevsky defensive region, located at the junction of the Southwestern and Western fronts, posed a serious threat to the left flank of the 10th Army.

Consequently, the actions to capture the area of Belev and Kozelsk developed into an independent operation, although of an auxiliary nature in relation to the general task of the armies of the left wing - access to the Warsaw highway and the Vyazma-Bryansk roadway. According to the directives of the front, the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps had the task of forcing the Oka River in the Likhvin-Belev sector with a swift blow and, then turning the main forces to the north-west, to capture Yukhnov on December 28 and cut off the enemy's retreat from Kaluga and Maloyaroslavets. The capture of Kozelsk was, in essence, an incidental task that ensured a strike in the direction of Yukhnov. Subsequently, the corps was to act in the direction of Vyazma. The 10th Army, after capturing Belev, was to reach the Kozelsk area on December 27, from where it would throw out mobile detachments to Sukhinichi and conduct in-depth reconnaissance in the direction of Kirov and Lyudinov.

The action plan of the cavalry corps was reported by its commander, General Belov, to the front commander on December 20. It consisted of four stages: the first stage (December 20-22) - preparatory measures in the process of movement with passing mastery of Odoev; the second stage (December 22-24) - forcing the Oka River in the Likhvin, Belev section; the third stage (December 24-27) - reaching the rear of the enemy in the Yukhnov, Mosalsk area (with the passing occupation of Kozelsk) and, finally, the fourth stage - a battle with the enemy in the Yukhnov area. This plan was basically approved by the front command. Thus, the

plan of the corps commander (its first and second stages, from December 20 to 24) was designed for a depth of up to 65 km (from the Krapivna, Plavsk line to the Oka River in the Likhvin, Belev section), which

gave an average daily rate of advance over 20 km. The fastest pace and depth of penetration into the enemy's location fell on the third stage (December 24–27). The strike of the cavalry corps in the third stage was calculated to a depth of more than 100 km (from the Likhvin, Belev line to Yukhnov), which gave an average daily rate of advance of more than 25 km. Consequently, in

the conditions of winter and the fight against an active enemy, the cavalry corps had to solve a difficult task. The action plan of the

commander of the 10th Army, General Golikov, consisted in the rapid occupation of Belev and the further offensive - the pursuit of the enemy in the direction of Sukhinichi (through Kozelsk) and further to Kirov, Lyudinovo. Aviation support

for the operation of the 10th Army and the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps was mainly carried out by the same air formations as during the Tula offensive operation, with the subsequent deployment of some air units to the Tula region.

In accordance with the directives of the front and the action plans developed by Generals Belov and Golikov, the offensive of the cavalry corps and the 10th Army continued. However, the deadlines for the implementation of the adopted plans have changed in accordance with the situation.

Just like the Kaluga operation of the 50th Army, the offensive of the 10th Army and the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps in the Belevsko-Kozelsk direction actually developed non-stop after the completion of the Tula operation, directly growing out of it. All regroupings, assignment of tasks and preparation of the operation took place in the process of development of the offensive, along with the resolution of incidental tasks. The offensive of the cavalry

corps and the 10th army after 19 December unfolded as follows.

Speaking from the line he occupied by the end of December 19, Prishnia, Star. Krapivenk and to the south, the cavalry corps advanced to the west during December 20, overcoming the resistance of the remnants of the 167th Infantry and 3rd Panzer divisions and the SS Regiment "Grossdeutschland". By the end of December 20, the corps went to the front

west of Krapivna, Umchino, Arkhangelskoye and began preparing an offensive in the direction of Odoev, with the task of taking it by the end of

December 21. The offensive of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps with the aim of capturing Odoev began on the morning of December 21 in the next grouping. On the right flank from the Zherdevo area, in the direction of Chantsevo, Zhemchuzhnikovo, the 1st Guards Cavalry Division advanced, with the task of capturing Odoev

from the east. The 2nd Guards Cavalry Division from the line of Umchino, Terenino (both points 3 km south and southeast of Krapivna) advanced in the direction of Bashevo, Nikolskoye, Obalduevo, with the task of

capturing Odoev from the south. The 322nd Rifle Division, located on the left flank of the Guards Cavalry Corps, received the task of advancing from the Arkhangelskoye region in a western direction, providing maneuvers for the 2nd Guards Cavalry Division from the south. The headquarters of the cavalry group was located in Prudy.

The advancing group of General Belov met stubborn enemy resistance on the entire front. As a result, our units, consistently knocking out the Germans from the settlements, moved forward with battles all day on December 21. No less stubborn fighting continued throughout December 22. By the end of December 22, the 1st Guards Cavalry Division with a strike from the east, and the 2nd Guards Cavalry Division with a strike from the south and southwest took Odoevo, knocking out parts of the 112th and 167th German infantry divisions from it. By this time, the 322nd Infantry Division had entered the Zhestovoe area.

After capturing Odoev, units of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps pursued the retreating enemy in a westerly direction and by 4 p.m. on December 24 reached the eastern bank of the Oka River, in the area of Kipet, Moschena, Gorbunovo. During this period, the corps group included the 41st, 57th and 75th cavalry divisions, which until December 23 constituted an independent group under one command, but due to its small number and weak armament, this group did not play a significant role. Therefore, the front command considered it necessary to pour all three divisions into the group of the commander of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps.[92]

On the afternoon of December 24, all three cavalry divisions (41st, 57th and 75th), after fighting with the remnants of the enemy's 112th Infantry Division on the Pokrovskoye, Belyi Kolodez line, advanced to the Krutoe, Romanovo, Rakhleevo area (25 km southeast of Belev), lagging behind the main parts of the cavalry corps by 10–12 km.

It should be added here that the march of the corps itself, after capturing Odoev, was already carried out under conditions of relatively weak enemy resistance. A significant shortcoming in organizing the offensive of the corps commander's group was that during its movement in the period following December 24, communication between the headquarters of the 50th and 10th armies and the headquarters of the front with the corps was often lost.

In the period from December 21 to 24, units of the 10th Army, overcoming the resistance of small rearguard groups of the enemy, reached the following areas by the afternoon of December 24: 10 km southwest

of Odoev). There were almost no enemy units in front of the division's front, since by that time units of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps were in front.

The 330th Rifle Division, as it approached the Yamontovsky line, the Arsenyev station, fought with the remnants of the 112th Infantry Division and, presumably, with units of the enemy's 56th Infantry Division. Following the 330th Rifle Division along the Ryazantsevo-Astapovo road (2 km north of the Arsenyev station), the 326th Rifle Division advanced. The 239th Rifle Division was concentrated in the area of Odoev, Krupets, Brusna (both points 5 km northwest and west of Odoev) with the task of reaching the Oka River in the Moschen area the next day. The rest of the army, being echeloned, were behind. As a result, during the offensive of the 10th Army and the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps from December 20 to 24, the corps reached the

Oka River and entered into battle with enemy units covering the retreat. Parts of the 10th Army, lagging behind by 10–15 km, were in a ledge to the left. This situation is explained, firstly, by the fact that the units of the 61st Army of the Southwestern Front adjacent to the left fell behind and forced their neighbor on the right to pay attention to their left flank, where the remnants of the German 112th Infantry Division resisted. In particular, the right-flank 342nd Rifle Division of the 61st Army by 12 o'clock on December 26 was fighting the enemy on the Bely Kolodez-Chermoshny line and only towards the end of the same day began to enter the line approximately south of Arseniev. The remaining divisions of the 61st Army by that time were in a ledge behind the 342nd Infantry Division. Secondly, this situation is explained by the conditions of the offensive and the 10th Army itself, the state of the rear of which was at a low level. The most striking combat episode for the period under review was the occupation of Odoev's 1st Guards Cavalry Corps. This, as we have seen, had a positive effect on the development of the offensive of the 50th Army.

The beginning of the

battles for Belev The command of the front, in the above-mentioned directive No. 125 / op of December 24, set the 10th Army the task: by the end of December 27, the main forces should withdraw to the area of the city of Kozelsk, and the mobile detachments should be thrown out by the same time in the direction of Sukhinichi in order to capture this point." At the same time, the 10th Army was to conduct deep reconnaissance in the direction of Sutoka, Kirov, Lyudinovo.

After the units of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps reached the line of the Oka River, and the 10th Army reached the Krupets, Krasnokolye line (7 km southwest of Odoev), Arsenyev station, the further offensive developed as follows.

On the night of December 25, the main forces of the corps made a crossing to the western bank of the Oka River in order to continue the offensive in a northwestern direction.

The 1st Guards Cavalry Division, having crossed the Oka River, on December 25 fought with an engineer battalion and other enemy units at the line of Likhvin station, Peskovatskoye (3 km west of Likhvin station), Myzhbor, where it was destroyed up to a company of Germans. At 15:00 on December 25, **the 2nd Guards**

Cavalry Division made a crossing at Nikolo-Gastun (1 km north of Moshcheny) with the main forces, and advanced detachments fought at the line of Senino 1st, Sergeevka.

The 75th Cavalry Division came under the command of the commander of the 2nd Guards Cavalry Division and attacked in the direction of Senino 2nd (1 km south of Senino 1st). By the end of December 25, **the**

57th Cavalry Division concentrated in the Nikolo-Gastun, Moschen, Blij. Rusanovo, having become subordinate to the commander of the 1st Guards Cavalry Division.

The 9th tank brigade was in Krapivna, where it brought itself in order and repaired the material part. **The 41st**

Cavalry Division remained in the reserve of the corps commander and was located in the area of Kipet, Pereslavichi. **The 322nd Rifle**

Division started a battle with the enemy on the outskirts of Belev, and **the 328th Rifle Division** (both were part of the group of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps) from the Bogdanovo, Streshnevo region was moving towards the Oka River.

On the position of the 10th Army during the night and day of December 25, nothing was known at the headquarters of the front due to a communication breakdown. The radio worked intermittently, and it was not possible to establish contact by plane due to a snowstorm and snowfall. Only by the morning of December 26 did it become known that the army divisions continued their offensive in the west.

direction, with the task of reaching the line of Gorki, Kudrino, Maslovo, Rovna. By the end of December 26, units of the 10th Army reached the line:

239th Rifle Division - Kryzhovka, Zenovo (both points on the western bank of the Oka River, north of Belev), Moschena, **324th Rifle Division** - Kudrino, Snykhovo; **330th Rifle Division** - Georgievka, Gorbunovo, Barovka (on the eastern bank of the Oka, northeast of Belev). **The 325th Rifle Division** was

moving towards the Kurakovo-Temryan line, with **the 322nd Rifle Division in front of it**, which began the battle for Belev; By December 27, the 325th Rifle Division, together with the **323rd and 326th Divisions**, was concentrated in the second echelon of the army in the area of \u200b\u200bSemenovskoe, Boloto, Pustynovka, Streshnevo (all points 15 km east of Belev).

On the morning of December 27, the battles for Belev began, which was turned by the enemy into a strong fortified defensive area with a well-developed barrier system, with its saturation with a large number of artillery, mortars and machine guns. In a number of areas, the approaches to the city were mined.

With the release of units of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps and the 10th Army to the Oka River and to the west of it, in the area north of Belev, the first stage of the Belevsko-Kozel operation ended. The enemy was shot down from the Oka line north of Belev, but stubbornly held this city behind him, covering the Oryol direction. At the same time, the Germans, rolling back to the west, make an attempt to hold on to other defensive positions (near Kozelsk, Sukhinichi, and others).

In this light, the exit of the 10th Army and the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps west of the Oka River had a positive effect not only on the actions of the armies of the left wing, but on the entire front, creating favorable prerequisites for the subsequent tasks of the front operation. Finishing the fulfillment of the tasks outlined by the

front during the period of the counteroffensive, the armies of the left wing in the subsequent period began simultaneously to solve new tasks for the front as a whole. This was one of the characteristic features of the operations carried out during the defeat of the Germans near Moscow. This nature of the actions was dictated by the situation that was developing at the front and required a non-stop offensive.

Conclusion on the actions of the armies of the left wing in the period from December 6 to

25, 1941 With the release of the armies of the left wing of the Western Front to the line west of Vysokinichi, east of Nedelnoye, Kaluga and further along the Oka River to Belev, an important period of the front-line operation ended - the

counteroffensive. The general results of the counteroffensive of the armies of the left wing are as follows. During the period from December 6 to 25, the armies covered the following distances in the fight against a strong enemy in snowy winter conditions. 49th Army - 40-60 km (the last for divisions of the left flank) with an average daily rate of advance of 2-3 km. If we take into account that the center of the army began the offensive on December 19 (the extreme right flank of the army - on December 24), and the left flank on December 14, then the rate of advance will increase to 5-6 km per day. The 50th Army, taking into account its advance on Shchekino during the Tula operation, reached the line of Kaluga, Likhvin about 110-120 km at an average daily advance

The 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, having launched an offensive from the area south of Mordves, covered a distance of about 200 km from December 6 to 25, giving an average daily pace of 8-10

km. The 10th Army, which operated on the retreating flank of the Western Front, advanced at the fastest pace. In 20 days, the 10th Army covered a distance of about 220 km, which achieved an average daily advance rate of 10-12 km. During the

considered period of time, the armies of the left wing of the front had to shoot down the enemy with stubborn battles from the following defensive lines and knock them out from the most important centers of resistance: on the front of the 49th Army from the line of the Oka and Protva rivers and from the Vysokinichi region; on the front of the 50th Army from the region of Kosaya Gora, Yasnaya Polyana, Shchekino, from the western bend of the Upa River and further from the line of the Oka River

from Kaluga to Likhvin. The most powerful stronghold of the enemy in the 50th Army's zone of operations was Kaluga,[93] the outcome of the struggle for which was decided only on December 30th. The 1st Guards Cavalry Corps met the strongest enemy resistance at the turn of Stalinogorsk, the Shat River and further Dedilovo, Uzlovaya and on the Plav River from Krapivna and to the south. Upon exiting the border of the Plav River to the west

the strongest battle ensued for Odoevo and along the Oka River in the area of Kipet, Moschena.

The 10th Army drove the enemy out of Mikhailov, drove him back from the Don River from the southern bank of the Stalinogorsk reservoir to Epifan and overcame resistance at the line of Uzlovaya, Bogoroditsk, Plavsk and the Plav River, north of the Arsenyevo station and, finally, the line of the Oka River near Belev, the outcome of the battles for which it was decided only on 31 December.

In the process of hostilities in the Tula direction, the troops of the Red Army, having liberated many hundreds of settlements from the enemy, took the following trophies from the Germans (not counting the large amount of destroyed military property): tanks - 54, guns - 179, vehicles - about 300, mortars - 104, machine guns - 185, rifles - about 1000, shells - about 2000, cartridges - about 500,000, mines - over 6000, motorcycles and bicycles - over 400, aircraft - 6. Nedelnoye, Kaluga and further on the Oka River to Belev, the fighting continued, remaining as

intense and active as it was, essentially a new stage in the front-line operation.
[94]

Chapter Five

Combat work of the air force

The Germans began the operation to capture Moscow without air superiority. The enemy was not able to suppress the aviation of the Western Front of the Red Army, the complete destruction of which was repeatedly announced by the German information bureau.

The withdrawal of our troops to Moscow and the inclusion in the fight at the front of part of the forces and means of the Moscow defense zone ensured a significant increase in the combat power of our air forces, which directly participated in the operation, and air superiority of our aircraft. In the first half of December the balance of forces in the air was 1.3:1 in our favor (750:550 aircraft).

By the beginning of the counter-offensive of the Red Army, the forces of our aviation, partially replenished from the reserve of the High Command, remained approximately the same composition as before. Air groups,

air defense and Western Front aviation continued to be based in the same areas and had the main task of interacting with ground forces in the same directions as in the defensive battles for Moscow. In particular, the air

forces of the Western Front performed the following tasks in December: a) destruction of enemy manpower and equipment; b) the prohibition of the approach of enemy reserves to the front; c) violation of enemy communication; d) destruction of railway junctions and bridges in the main directions of the approach of reserves and the supply of ammunition; e) covering the offensive of the front troops. In the battles for Moscow, our aviation was one of the important factors that made it possible to stop the further advance of the Germans and defeat them.

The first private operation in the defeat of the Germans was the destruction of the enemy grouping in the area of Petrovskoye, Akulovo, Tashirovo (the area north and northeast of Naro-Fominsk). Following this, the pursuit of the enemy began in the north of Moscow in the direction of Klin and in the south of Moscow in the direction of Stalinogorsk.

In December, our aviation, continuing to work with great tension, directed massive strikes against the retreating enemy units on the right flank - along the Leningrad highway from Kryukov to Klin and along the roads going west in the direction of Teryaeva Sloboda and Volokolamsk.

Long-range bomber aviation, which delivered its attacks on railway junctions and roads, simultaneously bombarded retreating German units on the left flank during the day.

The enemy sought to withdraw his equipment as quickly as possible, in particular, tanks. The roads to Klin and Teryaeva Sloboda were literally clogged with retreating cars, wagons and tanks. The actions of our aviation were so effective that after the troops of the Red Army occupied Teryaeva Sloboda and Klin, the road between these points was littered with the corpses of German soldiers, vehicles, tanks, destroyed by our aircraft during the defensive battles for Moscow and during the counteroffensive of the Red Army.

The offensive of our armies of the left wing was supported by the 2nd mixed aviation division stationed at the Noginsk and Moninsky air hubs. In addition, the 77th mixed aviation division of the Western Front and the regiments of the 6th Air Defense Aviation Corps were periodically involved. Air operations contributed greatly to the success of our offensive.

From November 22 to December 22, aviation operating in the Moscow direction made 6450 sorties, of which 4543 sorties (which is 70%) were against enemy troops. In total, 11,944 sorties were made with air defense aviation. 2369 tons of bombs were dropped, 8360 PC shells and 132,605 other shells were used. As a result of the actions of our

aviation, according to rough estimates, about 600 tanks, over 5,000 vehicles, about 100 guns and a large number of enemy infantry were destroyed, damaged and put out of action.

The actions of German aviation after December 5, 1941 (in connection with the transition of our troops to the offensive and the enemy's withdrawal) took on a slightly different character. Continuing to conduct active reconnaissance, the German military air forces directed the main blows at our advancing troops, mostly near the front line, with the aim of disrupting the battle formations of our troops, delaying our offensive and covering their retreating units from our air strikes. During this period of time, strikes against our rear facilities became an exception; the actions of enemy aircraft on our airfields also ceased. The air forces of the enemy were unable to cope with all the tasks in such a crucial period for the ground forces and therefore the main efforts were directed towards facilitating the withdrawal of their troops.

In addition, severe frosts, deep snow cover, difficulties in winter operation and unpreparedness for servicing aircraft in winter conditions also led to a decrease in enemy aviation activity. The number of his aircraft operating in front of the Western Front was gradually reduced. Heavy losses forced the German command to withdraw some units to the deep rear for the purpose of understaffing and retraining.

By the end of 1941, the myth of the invincibility of German aviation, so same, like the entire German army, was completely dispersed.

Our aviation played a big role in repelling the offensive of the fascist troops on Moscow and in their defeat during the counteroffensive. [95]

In accordance with the development of the operational situation, aviation efforts were directed to solving those tasks that the command considered the most important at this

stage. Of the 11,944 sorties made by aviation during the period from November 22 to December 22, 1941, 5510 were made directly against enemy troops, 4164 - to cover objects and troops, as well as to escort aviation, 162 - to operate on airfields, 674 - to actions on railways; the remaining sorties were made for other tasks. At the same time, it should be noted that the full-scale offensive of the ground

forces was not accompanied by the same offensive against the German air forces, despite the presence of favorable conditions for this. These conditions were: the moral and some numerical superiority of our aviation and the insufficient readiness of German aviation for operations in winter conditions. There was no organized struggle for air supremacy by destroying enemy aircraft at airfields. This made it possible for the

German command to withdraw its aircraft to the rear and save forces, which later affected the course of our offensive. This also allowed the enemy to conduct aerial reconnaissance, the data of which the German command could be guided by when organizing defensive actions.[96]

While achieving the solution of the most important and urgent tasks in the course of the operation, on which the achievement of victory on the battlefield depended, our air forces could not simultaneously exert a strong influence on the entire depth of the enemy location (by disrupting transportation, prohibiting evacuation, etc.). At the same time, the rapid change in the operational situation required great flexibility in aviation control. Aviation often had to act "on call", based on the needs of today, and sometimes even of the present moment, in order to achieve the greatest effectiveness of its actions.

Chapter six

Logistics and supply organization

In early December, the material security of the Western Front [\[97\]](#) was higher than in mid-November. The front had the most popular types of ammunition 2-3 ammunition, fuel 5-6 gas stations and food 10-12 cottages. The bulk of these funds (4/5 of ammunition, **2/3 of** fuel and food) were in the troops and at army bases.

This distribution of material resources was beneficial in the event of an offensive. At the same time, the stocks of front-line bases were insufficient and quickly depleted in the first days of December (by December 6, 1941, the stocks of ammunition of the most popular types decreased to 0.1–0.2 ammunition, stocks of motor gasoline to 0.6 refueling and flour to 1.5 dachas) alarmed the front command.

The Front Logistics Directorate, in its report of December 6, signals to the center about the threatening depletion of supplies in its bases. "The supply of ammunition, fuel and food to the front according to the orders of the center," the conclusions of this report say, "is extremely slow and does not satisfy the increased needs

of the armies." The depth of the front and army rear and the location of the bases fully met the objectives of the material support of the offensive operation.

The rear and supply of the Western Front by the beginning of the offensive were organized in accordance with the directive on the rear of December 3, 1941, No. 025. The rear border of the front remained the same. Only the borders of the 49th Army had to be changed due to the advance of the enemy in the direction of Ryazan and Kashir: the rear army border was pulled back a little, and the front administrative station was moved from Ryazan to Kustarevka station (75 km east of Shilov), and on December 8 to Sasovo station (50 km east of Shilov).

Larger changes were made to the organization of the rear of most armies. But they were also caused not by the rearrangement of the rear in accordance with the new operational tasks, but by a sharp change in the conditions of basing, the transfer to the front again

formed armies and violation of the rear organization in the 50th army. • The

right rear border of the 30th Army went along the operational border of the front, the left - along the line of Moshnino, Rogachevo (excl.), Tatishchevo (excl.) further along the operational border of the army. To organize the basing of the army, the railway section of the station Ryazantsevo, Moshnino was assigned. The army base was ordered to be deployed in the area of the Berendeevo station, the advanced sections of the field

warehouses - in the area of Savelovo, Taldom. • The left border of the 1st Army - Kirzhach, Ashukino, Chernaya, Kamenka. For the organization of basing, the Alexandrov, Sofrino railway section (excl.) was allocated; the army base was ordered to be deployed in the area of Alexandrov, Buzhaninovo, Zagorsk, Gryaz; further - along the operational border of the army. For the organization of basing, the army received the Sofrino site, Moscow (excl.). Before the formation of its base,

the army was supplied from front-line warehouses located in Moscow.

• The left border of the 16th Army - Gorodishche, Noginsk, Lukino, Babushkin, Pavshino, Rozhdestveno; further - along the operational border of the army. To organize the basing of the army, the railway section Mamontovka, Moscow (excl.) and the Mytishchi-Monino branch were assigned. An army base with small reserves was ordered to be deployed in the Schelkovo, Bolshevo sector. The army is allowed to receive everything it needs from front-line Moscow warehouses with delivery to the tro

• The right border of the 5th army - Pavlovsky Posad, Zheleznodorozhny, Kapotnya, Troparevo, Nemchinovo; left border - Zaponorye, Ilyinskoye, Biryulyovo, Vnukovo; further - within the operational boundaries of the army. These borders, the presence of which complicated the organization of the rear not only of the 5th, but also of the neighboring armies, were necessary in order to be able to distinguish

Moscow from the army's rear. For the organization of basing, the army received railway sections: Orekhovo-Zuyevo, Zheleznodorozhnaya station; Lyubertsy, Bykovo; station Kolomenskaya, Biryulyovo, Saburovo. The army base was ordered to be deployed in the Orekhovo-Zuevo, Fryazevo,

advanced offices of field warehouses - on unpaved traffic routes in the area of Lyubertsy, Vnukovo.

- Left border of the 33rd Army - Ilyinsky Pogost, Bronnitsy, Podolsk (excl.); further - along the operational border of the army. For the organization of basing, the army received railway sections: Kurovskoye, Lyubertsy; Bronnitsy, Kratovo; Butovo, Podolsk and Vnukovo, Alabino. The army was ordered to deploy a base in the Kurovskoye, Gzhel section, advanced field warehouses - in the railway sections of Rastorguevo, Domodedovo and Butovo, Podolsk.
- Left border of the 43rd Army

- Stepanshchino, Velyaminovo, Lopasnya; further - along the operational border of the army. For the organization of basing, railway sections were assigned: Voskresensk, Bronnitsy; Domodedovo, Velyaminovo and Podolsk, Lopasnya. The army base was ordered to be deployed in the Voskresensk, Bronnitsy sector, advanced field warehouses in the Domodedovo, Velyaminovo, Podolsk, Lopasnya sectors.

- The left border of the 49th Army - Kolomna (common with the 50th Army), Stupino (excl). Priluki (excl.), Shulgino (excl.). To organize the basing of the army, railway sections were assigned: Khoroshevo, Voskresensk, Zhilevo, Mikhnevo (together with the 50th Army) and Lopasnya, Serpukhov, Shulgino. The army base was ordered to be deployed in the area of Khoroshevo, Voskresensk, Bogdanovka, advanced field warehouses - in the areas of Mikhnevo, Zhilevo and Sharapova

Okhota, Tarusskaya. • With the subordination of the 10th Army in the rear to the Western Front and its access to the line of the 50th Army, the order on the rear of the front of December 8 assigns the left rear border of the 50th Army along the Spassk-Ryazansky line (excl.), Mikhailov (excl. .),

The 50th Army was allocated the Kolomna, Ryazan railway section with railway lines to Ozyory and Zaraysk for the organization of basing. A temporary base with

small supplies was ordered to be deployed in the Stupino, Kashira region, advanced field warehouses in the Tula region. In fact, the army received the bulk of the cargo along the Kursk railway and the Serpukhov highway; the forward sections of the field warehouses turned out to be the base of the army.

- The 10th Army did not have its own base until mid-December and was supplied from the head offices of front-line warehouses at Sasovo station. During

the autumn, motor transport was worn out, some of the cars needed or were under repair. In addition, as a result of the rapid numerical growth of the front, there was a lack of vehicles, mainly ZIS-5 vehicles and gas tanks. The availability of vehicles at the front at the beginning of the operation and in the middle of it is shown in the table below.

Availability and technical condition of front vehicles by December 6 and 15, 1941

Марка машин	Положено по штату		Имелось налицо		Находилось в ремонте			
	к 06.12	к 15.12	к 06.12	к 15.12	капитальном		текущем	
					к 06.12	к 15.12	к 06.12	к 15.12
ГАЗ-АА	19042	24119	18 905	19857	441	538	1388	1169
ЗИС-5	20435	23503	10595	11327	139	329	632	615
Бензоцистерны								
разные	2445	2689	1228	1557	11	37	45	

With the front's average daily need for materiel, the total weight of which was determined at 8,000–10,000 tons, the available vehicles with a total carrying capacity of 40,000 tons fully ensured the timely delivery of everything necessary to the troops. The proximity to the front of army bases and the presence of a well-developed network of railways and highways facilitated and simplified delivery.

In a modern operation, especially an offensive one, motor vehicles are required not only for the supply of materiel to the troops. During the offensive, the volume of operational traffic reaches significant proportions; an increasing number of vehicles

off to service repair and restoration work. At the same time, as troops advance, they break away from army bases, the supply and evacuation lines lengthen, and the conditions for transport deteriorate. To ensure uninterrupted supply of advancing troops and the rapid restoration of roads in the territory liberated from the enemy, it was necessary to calculate and prepare additional vehicles. If for the first time things were going well with the supply of vehicles to

the front, then their distribution among armies and divisions cannot be considered rational. Thus, the 43rd Army, with a shallow rear and favorable road conditions, had about 4,000 trucks (of which 770 were in army transport); The 30th Army, with extended supply routes, with the worst provision of divisions with vehicles, by November 27 had only 136 in army vehicles, and by December 12 - 260 vehicles. The 16th Army was even worse provided with vehicles, which had only 156 vehicles in army transport (of which only 13 were ZIS-5 vehicles).

As a result of the incorrect distribution of vehicles in some armies, transport was unloaded, while in others it could not meet the existing needs. The logistic report of the 16th Army of December 5 reported: ***“The understaffing of vehicles (8th Guards Rifle Division, 49th Rifle Regiment, 40th Regiment, 354th Rifle Division and 36th Rifle Regiment) to standard standards leads to interruptions in supply, especially ammunition and food.”*** Army transport was not enough to cope with the transportation of army supplies and to assist the divisions.

The auto reserve of the front (with a total number of 2000 trucks) had the task of transporting goods on front roads, ensuring operational transportation and, if necessary, assisting in the transportation of armies. However, there were so many who wanted to use the front's auto reserve that the road department could not satisfy all applications. By the beginning of the offensive, the front

included four road maintenance regiments, one road maintenance battalion and a separate control company. Of these, only one 5th road maintenance regiment, which was at the disposal of the front, and the 41st road maintenance regiment of the 30th Army were

more or less completed. The road maintenance regiment of the 50th Army as an active unit was last shown in the summary of December 1, 1941. The front was

also insufficiently provided with road construction units. There were only 6 battalions of them: two each in the 43rd and 49th armies and one each in the 16th and 5th armies. In addition, the NKVD Gushosdor Directorate, which served the Western Front, had three road building and two bridge building battalions. Due to the

insufficient number of road maintenance units, the front and the armies did not have fully equipped military roads during the period under review. The best roads within the borders of the army were declared by order on the rear as military highways. Adjustment posts were set up on these roads (often this was not done either). The influence of winter conditions on the

organization of logistics and supplies was felt later. In December, there were no large snow drifts, but the severe frosts that had already established in the middle of the month complicated the organization of transportation: when refueling cars, it was necessary to preheat water, oil, and protect transported vegetables and bread from frost. Even greater difficulties arose during the evacuation of the sick and wounded by an empty car. To heat the evacuees, it was necessary to build stopping points on the evacuation routes, provide motor transport units with special blankets and sleeping bags.

Preparations for ensuring the operation of vehicles for the delivery and evacuation in winter conditions began in early autumn. Particularly great work was done by the fuel supply departments and the sanitary institutions of the front. The necessary material part was prepared in advance, instructions were issued, their study was organized by the commanding staff and drivers. All this ensured then the rapid overcoming of the difficulties that arose.

Preparation for the material support of the offensive was carried out by the Supreme High Command and the main departments. This was caused by the operational and rear situation that developed at the end of November - the presence in close proximity to the front of large warehouses of the People's Commissariat of Defense with large

reserves of material resources, the huge resources of Moscow, which fed not only the Western Front. Life has

fully confirmed the correctness of the decision: to concentrate preparations for the material support of the offensive in the hands of the main departments. Nevertheless, this technique, although it ensured the preservation of the prepared operation in secret, cannot be turned into a rule. A number of difficulties in the material support of the advancing units, as we will see below, were the result of the lack of preparation of the front and army rear apparatus for the offensive.

Since the end of November, the influx of reinforcements and reinforcement units to the front has intensified. New armies were created in close proximity to the front. At the same time, there was a sharp change in the grouping of forces. The greatest number of them was sent to the wings, and the newly created armies were also aimed there. As a result of all this, the center of gravity of the struggle at this stage moved to the wings

of the front. The distribution in the first days of December of the weapons at the disposal of the front is shown in the table.

Grouping of combat assets of the Western Front to the beginning counteroffensive

Вооружение	Правое крыло	Центр	Левое крыло
Винтовок	136 500	116 400	125 900
Минометов	1670	552	1081
Орудий дивизионной и полковой артиллерии	472	230	430
122-мм орудий	99	38	66

Based on these data, it can be concluded that the wings played an important role, which had an active task - to take the enemy wedges into Soviet pincers. At the same time, the armies of the center, which covered the shortest routes to Moscow, also required constant care for their provision. Despite

the fact that the rear workers paid much attention to the material support of the flank armies, not enough was done to provide them with an advantage in terms of

compared with the armies of the center. Data on the state of material security of the armies fully confirm this.

Material security of the armies of the center and wings by December 5, 1941

Наименование	Имелось в боекомплектах, заправках и дачах		
	В армиях правого крыла (30-я, 1-я, 20-я и 16-я)*	В армиях центра (5-я, 33-я и 43-я)	В армиях левого крыла (50-я, 10-я, 49-я) и 1-м гвардей- ском кавалерийском корпусе**
Винтовочных пат- ронов	1,8	1,8	1,7
Мин	1,2	2,8	2,6
Артиллерийских выстрелов	1,4	2,5	2,1
Горючего	2,3	2,5	2,0
Продовольствия	4,5	6,0	4,5

*

Data on the material security of the 20th Army could not be found. The 1st Army does not take into account the stocks of field warehouses. **Data on the material security of the 10th Army and the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps could not be found.

This table shows that by the beginning of the front's counteroffensive, the armies of the center were slightly better equipped than the flank armies. The concern of the rear workers regarding the material support of the armies of the center is quite understandable. They covered the shortest routes to the capital of the Motherland.

In conclusion, it must be said that the measures of the main departments to prepare for the upcoming offensive and the presence of still large stocks in the Moscow warehouses of the People's Commissariat of Defense, the rich production and transport resources of Moscow provided a counteroffensive in material terms. At the same time, the extremely insufficient supplies at the front bases had a negative (as we shall see below) effect on the material support of the advancing troops. The depth of the

front and army rear areas, the grouping of available materiel met the requirements

offensive operation. In the presence of a well-developed road network, the stocks in the warehouses of the People's Commissariat of Defense were a maneuverable reserve of materiel that could be quickly supplied to any of the wings of the front. The weak point in the forthcoming counteroffensive was the lack of provision of the front with

road maintenance and road repair units, the lack of a clear calculation for building up the front's vehicles in accordance with the advance of the units. The greatest difficulties in organizing supplies and transportation could arise in the 30th and 10th armies, which were poorly provided with vehicles, while they had the longest supply routes on the ground. The

offensive of the Western Front, which began on December 6, posed large and complex tasks for the logistics and supply workers. It was necessary on the move to reorganize the work of the rear and find the necessary additional material means to meet the increased requirements of the troops.

The rear of the front, with the active assistance of the main departments, coped with its task. In the very first days of the offensive, measures were taken to increase the replenishment of front-line bases and bring them closer to the troops.

On the instructions of the head of the rear, the quartermaster of the front, in case the units moved forward, developed a plan for the deployment by December 13 of the head departments of front-line food warehouses with six daily food dachas in the areas: Skhodnya station - to provide the 30th and 1st armies, Nakhabino station - to provide the 20th th and 16th armies and the Odintsovo station - to support the 5th army.

Food supplies for the 49th, 50th and 10th armies were supposed to be concentrated in the Moscow region, with the supply to the army at the Lukhovitsy station and the Tula station by railway flights. During the provision of a material counteroffensive, maneuver was used not only by ~~material means~~ ^{specializations}, but also by rear institutions and transport units.

At the initiative of the Road Department of the Front, part of the auto reserve was relocated closer to the left flank of the front, which found itself in the most difficult conditions in relation to the organization delivery.

During the counter-offensive, the volume of rear work increased significantly, the situation and conditions changed. The troops of the front needed to submit a little more combat equipment than planned. At the same time, in the course of work on the material support of the troops, it was necessary to make changes to the previously outlined plan for the distribution of the most popular types of ammunition. Adjustments were made in accordance with the operational tasks of the armies and the situation. The work done by the rear of the front is reflected in the table below.

Ammunition supply plan and its implementation (in ammunition)

Наименование вооружения	Для армий правого крыла		Для армий центра		Для армий левого крыла	
	запланировано с 1 по 20.12	фактически подано с 6 по 20.12	запланировано с 1 по 20.12	фактически подано с 6 по 20.12	запланировано с 1 по 20.12	фактически подано с 6 по 20.12
Винтовочные патроны	0,88	0,77	0,5	0,7	0,8	1,2
50-мм мины	0,25	0,5	0,2	0,3	0,3	0,6
82-мм мины	1,5	1,5	0,36	0,7	2,2	0,85
120-мм мины	0,45	—	0,32	—	0,5	—
45-мм выстрелы	1,6	0,25	1,5	0,25	2,1	0,5
выстрелы к:						
76-мм орудиям	0,8	0,6	0,25	0,3	0,6	0,45
122-мм орудиям	2,0	2,6	5,0	4,3	1,6	4,2
152-мм орудиям	1,6	2,3	0,95	1,0	1,0	0,5

Insufficient number of carry-over and lack of maneuverable stocks of mines, shots for regimental and divisional artillery in front salaries created great difficulties in providing them to the troops. There were days when the front command did not have the most popular types of ammunition at its disposal. The rear report of December 19 ended with the following conclusion: ***"There are absolutely no mines and shots of regimental and divisional artillery in the front depots."***

At such critical moments, the Main Artillery Directorate came to the rescue, sending ammunition to the front from its warehouses near Moscow or directly from factories on vehicles of the Supreme High Command auto reserve. Cargoes were often sent to the address of the connection, and sometimes directly to the unit. So, for example, on December 5, during the days of crisis, 3,000 bottles of KS liquid were sent directly from the factory to the 64th Infantry Division. Rifle and machine-gun cartridges, hand grenades and shots for 122-mm howitzers were sent from factories and warehouses near Moscow to the 331st Rifle Division in 36 vehicles. On the same day, on the instructions of other departments, cargo was sent for the 35th, 17th, 336th and 338th rifle divisions.

These facts, and more could be cited, testify to the flexibility of our logistics and supply apparatus, to its ability, in the interests of the cause, to retreat from the scheme, to quickly concentrate all forces to provide troops in the decisive sector of the struggle, to find the necessary means and appropriate methods for their delivery to the troops.

The situation that developed near Moscow in early December forced the central administrations in some cases to engage in the direct supply of formations, and sometimes even units. However, this approach should not be abused. Meanwhile, in other, calmer periods, no less cargo was sent by order of the main departments to individual formations. This provided great assistance to the front, but greatly overloaded the main departments, prevented them from doing their main work, which had more important

meaning.

The weight of ammunition actually supplied to the army averaged about 1000 tons per day. For the front, this figure is not large, but nevertheless, in some cases, there were difficulties in transporting ammunition, especially after December 15, when, in fact, their bulk was brought up. These difficulties were caused mainly by the beginning of snowdrifts and in some cases by poor organization of transportation. With the increased saturation of the front with forces and means, the loading in the rear

and supply routes increased, the need for well-equipped military roads and the introduction of a schedule for the movement of transport along them became more and more apparent. Due to bad

organizing traffic control on December 13, the 340th Infantry Division was 12 hours late in concentrating in the landing area. Operational transfer actually turned out to be thwarted. The 5th Guards Rifle Division found itself in an even worse situation. During the transportation of the division on December 22, the road Serpukhov, Volkovskoye turned out to be heavily covered with snow, during the movement of convoys **“a traffic jam formed, due to which,”** the order for the army says, **“ 5 Guards. The SD was 5 hours late in concentrating, and because it was forced to move this watch during the day, it suffered in vain in killed and wounded from enemy aircraft.”**

The question of attaching road maintenance units to the front was repeatedly raised before the center. But only now, having experience in organizing deliveries under the conditions of an offensive operation, the front made quite realistic calculations. For the construction of military highways, the front requested one road maintenance regiment per army and for each front military highway.

In order to unload roads and free vehicles in case of material maneuvers and operational transfers, the Military Council of the front ordered property, ammunition, etc. to be supplied from front warehouses to the head offices of army field warehouses by rail. The use of vehicles for this purpose was allowed only with the special permission of the Military Council of the front. The uneven provision of divisions with vehicles led to

its irrational use, to the complication of transportation. To eliminate this, **the** front ordered the Military Councils of the armies to redistribute the vehicles available in the troops in order to provide each division with the possibility of daily delivery of **1/4 ammunition** , **1/2 refueling** , 1 daily food supply and **1/2** daily fodder supply over a distance of 60– 70 km.

With the staffing of divisional vehicles, the divisions were ordered to transport troops from the head offices of field army depots on their own. In exceptional cases, it was allowed to attach units of horse-drawn battalions to them.

The importance and timeliness of these instructions is indisputable, but the situation required the strengthening of the vehicles of the flank armies, in which the conditions for the supply were especially difficult.

On the instructions of Comrade Stalin, the 805th autobattalion and the 30th army - the 775th autobattalion were additionally assigned from the auto reserve of the Supreme High Command of the 10th Army on December 14, 1941. At the same time, in

order to shorten the distance of delivery on the ground, the head of the rear of the front ordered the head offices of the field army warehouses to be moved forward by December 20: 1st Army - to the area of the stations Klin, Solnechnogorsk; 20th Army - Kryukovo, Povorovo; 16th Army - Nakhbino, Istra; 5th Army - Golitsino, Kubinka; 33rd Army - Vnukovo, Aprelevka; 49th Army - Sharapova Okhota, Serpukhov; 50th Army - Tula; 10th Army - Uzlovaya, Tula, Shchekino. The head office of the field army warehouse

of the 43rd army

remained in place.

By December 20, the heads of the supply departments were ordered to bring stocks in army food depots to 7 dachas, ammunition - up to 1 ammunition for machine guns and up to 1.5 artillery, fuel and lubricants, 1.5 refills for combat and 2 refills for transport vehicles. By the same time, mobile stocks in the troops will be replenished to the norm. These orders had important consequences. The use of army vehicles in the military transport link has

decreased. Less cargo began to be transferred by road and in the army. If in October and the first half of **November** more than half of the ammunition was transported by road, then during the counteroffensive **2/3** of them were transported by rail. It is necessary to note the concern of the Front's Military Council for the timely redeployment of front depots. At the same time, instructions were given to the commanders of the armies about pulling the army and military rear closer to

the front. It was the right move. The timely pulling up of rear organs and materiel during an offensive is one of the important conditions for providing troops. This old truth, which is no less important in our day, was not clear to everyone.

The order for the rear of the 16th Army of December 11 indicated: until the units reached the Novo-Petrovskoye, Kostrovo line, divisional rear forces were forbidden to cross to the western shore of the Istra reservoir and beyond the Povarovo, Rozhdestvenskoye line. This led the divisional rear lines to be separated from the

troops by 30–35 km. The delay in pulling up the rear behind the advancing troops already in the period under review led to their lagging behind. The ammunition of the 329th Rifle Division was so far behind, ***“that it was recognized,”*** says the report of the Deputy Chief of Artillery of the 10th Army for Supply, ***“ it would be more expedient to transfer them by rail. on the PAS army, and supply the division with ammunition***

from the PAS department. One of the reasons behind the backlog (especially army bases and sanitary facilities) was the slow restoration of the railways. For this reason, the army warehouses of the 10th Army on December 22 turned out to be 100–150 km from the troops. For this distance, along damaged profiled and country roads, 400-500 tons had to be supplied daily, which was the average daily requirement of the army. The situation with the delivery worsened due to the beginning of snow drifts, the lack of organized snow protection of the army road and the untimely clearing of snow from it. In such conditions, the available vehicles (comprising 1260 trucks) could not cope with the delivery. The army command turned to the front with a request to strengthen the army transport at the expense of the front's auto reserve until the restoration of the Tula-Kozelsk railway section.

Things were no better in the 50th Army. There was a sufficient amount of food in the army warehouses, but due to the remoteness of the warehouses and the lack of vehicles, there were interruptions in the supply of units. In order to avoid interruptions in supply, the army quartermaster created letuchki, which served the most necessary things - bread, meat, concentrates - to the divisional exchange offices. As a result of the

successful offensive of the units of the Western Front, the question arose of the rapid restoration of railways, highways and dirt roads. The available railway repair and restoration units, according to the calculations of the front, ensured the restoration of 7–8 km of roads per day in winter conditions; actually

the areas that could be restored were smaller. Severe frosts, short days, difficulties with the delivery of building materials created enormous difficulties that the repair and restoration railway units had to overcome; meanwhile, according to the same calculations, to ensure uninterrupted supply of the advancing units, it would be necessary to restore 10-12 km of roads per day.

According to calculations, the road departments of the front, in order to ensure the timely restoration and repair of highways and dirt roads, required two road-building and one bridge-building battalions per army and for each military road of the front, and a total of 28 road-building and 14 bridge-building battalions.

During the counter-offensive, the volume of work on supplying troops increased significantly. For comparison, let's take the consumption of the most popular types of ammunition in the defensive battle of the Western Front from November 16 to December 6 and during the counteroffensive from December 6 to 22.

Consumption of the most important types of ammunition in defensive and offensive battles

Наименование	Израсходовано в оборонительных сражениях с 16 ноября по 6 декабря		Израсходовано в наступательных сражениях с 6 по 22 декабря	
	в тыс. шт.	в боекомплектках	в тыс. шт.	в боекомплектках
Винтовочные патроны	24000	Около 0,4	33600	0,66
50-мм мины	100	0,5	237	1,04
82-мм мины	92	0,9	182	1,35

Наименование	Израсходовано в оборонительных сражениях с 16 ноября по 6 декабря		Израсходовано в наступательных сражениях с 6 по 22 декабря	
	в тыс. шт.	в боекомплектках	в тыс. шт.	в боекомплектках
107- и 120-мм мины	32	2,6	25,6	2,15
45-мм выстрелы	82	0,5	104	0,86
выстрелы к орудиям:				
76-мм полк. и див.	144	1,2	185,6	1,40
122-мм гаубичным	72	2,2	73,6	2,30
122-мм пушечным	11	2,0	11	2,0
152-мм гаубичным	25	2,0	16	0,75

The table shows that the consumption of ammunition during the offensive was much more than in a defensive battle.

The table shows the share of certain types of ammunition in defensive and offensive operations under specific conditions that developed near Moscow at the end of 1941. For greater clarity, let's take the consumption of the most important types of ammunition in defensive and offensive operations per unit of weapons (for the same period of time).

The consumption of rifle and machine-gun cartridges in a defensive operation is related to their consumption during an offensive as 1: 1.5. The consumption of other types of ammunition is determined as follows: 50 mm min - 1: 2.4; 82 mm min - 1: 1.75; 107- and 120 mm mines - 1: 0.8; 45 mm shots - 1: 2; 76-mm regimental and divisional artillery - 1: 1.1; 122 mm guns - 1: 1.2; 152 mm guns - 1: 0.8.

When analyzing these data, it is necessary to take into account the peculiarities of the situation that developed in early December on the Western Front. The enemy did not have time to gain a foothold on the line he had reached, as a result of which the consumption of ammunition in the first days of our counteroffensive was less significant than might have been expected. No less influenced by winter conditions, which made it difficult to transport heavy materiel (152-mm guns) and bring mines to 107- and 120-mm mortars.

During the offensive, clear planning of supply and transportation, material support was of exceptional importance.

generally. Meanwhile, the supply of goods from the front bases to the army and from the latter to the troops (as the deputy commander for logistics points out in a report of December 18) was often carried out without any plan, in the order of separate orders. The delay in reports, their often unclear and incomplete coverage of the rear situation made the work of the apparatus extremely difficult and caused haste. This alone can explain the frequent cases of supplying units and formations with funds that they did not need, sending vehicles to warehouses for cargo that was not there, etc. On December 17, the 796th motor battalion sent 17 vehicles to transport goods from the warehouse No. 1389 to the city of Solnechnogorsk, but the necessary cargo was not there, and the cars, having stood for 11 hours, returned to the unit on

December 18 without completing the task. Noting the abnormality of this situation, the deputy front commander for rear in his directive demanded that the heads of the content departments think over the issue, give the necessary instructions to subordinates on compiling reports, sufficiently fully and clearly covering the state of the rear and material support, and to achieve their regular and timely receipt. The directive required timely sending applications and demands to the contenting body, and achieving planned work. **Conclusions.** The material

resources of the front and the salaries of the People's Commissariat of Defense, located in the Moscow region, ensured the performance of offensive tasks by the front. By December 6, the depletion of the stocks of front-line bases and their slow replenishment caused a number of difficulties in supplying the advancing units.

Most difficulties were encountered in the organization of transportation to the troops. These difficulties were caused by the lack of road maintenance and repair parts, the influence of winter conditions, not quite rational distribution of vehicles and defects in the organization of transportation. When the troops were detached from their bases, the shortage of motor transport units also had a negative effect. During the counter-offensive, the

question arose of planning the work of the rear for the material support of the advancing troops. Without this, as experience has shown, it is impossible to organize the interaction of numerous links in the rear and supply agencies and achieve

purposeful and economical use of available funds. The directives and instructions given by the Front Logistics Directorate and the central bodies demanded a fundamental improvement in the planning of work on material support. In conclusion, it must be said that,

despite the serious difficulties that arose, the apparatus of the rear of the front, with the active assistance of the center, materially provided for the counteroffensive of the Red Army. Interruptions in supply did not interfere with the operational-tactical activities of the troops.

Chapter Seven

General overview of the December period

As a result of the miscalculations of the German fascist leadership in the field of planning the war as a whole and in conducting operations in the Moscow direction, the plan to capture the capital of the Soviet state failed. In early December, the Germans approached Moscow 25 km from the northwest and could already fire at the city from long-range guns. But that was the end of their offensive capabilities. In the process of a twenty-day fierce struggle on the outskirts of Moscow, the Germans lost their advantages in terms of forces and operational position. They were soon forced to go on the defensive in unfavorable conditions, being engulfed on both wings by the troops of the Red Army, and then, under the ever-increasing onslaught of our units, they began a hasty retreat.

The covert concentration of reserve armies, the correct determination of the moment of transition to the offensive, and the correct choice of directions for the main attacks on the flanks contributed to the success of the Red Army's operations during the crisis days of the battle near Moscow. These events, as well as the circumstances preceding and accompanying them, have already been

covered by us. The immediate goal of the actions of the Red Army command in early December was to use the favorable moment to launch a counteroffensive on both wings and defeat the German flank groups with concentric strikes. This led to successful battles for the Red Army in the Klin area, the Istra reservoir, which ended in the defeat and retreat of the remnants of the northern German shock group (3rd and 4th tank groups, which lost almost all of their tanks). At the same time, our counteroffensive was unfolding in the south, where the enemy's 2nd Panzer Army was defeated in the area of Tula, Benev, Stalinogorsk and also began to hastily retreat to the southwest, pursued by our troops.

The directive of the Military Council of the Western Front of December 9 stated that the main goal of the actions of the troops of the Western Front was to break the flank as quickly as possible.

enemy groupings, seize his technical means, transport, weapons and, rapidly moving forward to cover his flank groupings, finally encircle and destroy all enemy armies that opposed our Western Front. The troops of the Red Army, fulfilling their assigned tasks, developed the offensive and delivered blow after blow to the Germans. During the period from the beginning of the second German offensive on Moscow (that is, from November 16) to December 10, we captured and destroyed (without taking into account aviation actions): tanks - 1434, vehicles - 5416, guns - 575, mortars - 339, machine guns - 870. German losses during this time amounted to over 85,000 people killed. Subsequently, the operational plan of

the command of the Red Army received its consistent development in the directives of the front (dated December 13, No. 0103 and 0104, December 16, No. 0112, December 20, No. 0116, December 24, No. 0125, etc.), given on the basis of instructions from the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. It envisaged (in cooperation with the Kalinin Front) the encirclement and defeat of the opposing Nazi troops by pushing forward both wings of the Western Front and enveloping the enemy forces with them. By December 18, the

armies of the front were to reach the line of Stepurino (22 km southeast of Staritsa), Shakhovskaya, Ashcherino, Gribovskoye (20 km east of Mozhaisk), Mayrino, Balabanovo, Tarutino, Nedelnoye, Zhelyabuzhsky, Khanino, Odoevo, Arsenyevskoye. According to the directive issued on December 16, the armies of the front were to reach the line of Bolshaya Ledinki (8 km south of Staritsa), Pogorelovo Gorodishche, Mikhalevo, Mozhaisk, west of Borovsk, Ugodsky Zavod, Maloyaroslavets, Pletnevka (10 km west of Kaluga), Likhvin by December 21. The tasks assigned

to the armies of the front on December 20 provided for the right wing to reach the Zubtsov-Gzhatsk line by the end of December 27, and the left wing to the Linen Factory front, Kozelsk. At the same time, the center advanced more slowly than the wings, and by this time should have been approximately on the line Mozhaisk, Maloyaroslavets. Thus, it was planned to create a situation in which both wings would move forward and it would be possible to envelop the entire central (Gzhatsko-Vyazma-Yukhnovskaya) enemy grouping.

However, as we have seen, life has made significant adjustments to this plan. The battles in the areas of Klin and the Istra reservoir on December 11–15, although they ended in victory for the Red Army, nevertheless delayed the advance of our troops, gave the German command the opportunity to gain time and organize a strong defense along the line of the Lama and Ruza rivers. At this turn, the offensive of the right wing of the Western Front was forced to temporarily stop. It was necessary to prepare a breakthrough for the fortified zone, which could not be taken on the move. The fighting here in late December - early January took

on a protracted character. On the southern wing (especially on the left flank of the front), operations were constantly developing in more maneuverable conditions and at a faster pace. The Germans at first sought to get out of the gripped situation as soon as possible; our troops pursued them. Subsequently, nowhere did the enemy manage to linger on intermediate lines and organize a stubborn defense. This was facilitated by the fact that the withdrawal of enemy troops from the Tula region was carried out in divergent directions: units of the 4th German army retreated to Kaluga and Yukhnov, and the 2nd tank army to Orel. Even such a convenient defensive line as the Oka River between Kaluga and Belev was overcome by our troops at the end of December after a series of battles. As a result, a favorable situation was created for the further immediate offensive of the left wing to the west and northwest in accordance with the plan of the front operation. Our troops here were rapidly advancing to great depths.

The center, against which the Germans were strongly fortified, occupying their positions for about two months, at first secured the inner flanks of the now invading wings of the Western Front, and then, from December 18, it itself went on the offensive in order to break through the Nazis in the Naro-Fominsk direction. The first offensive here, as we have seen, was not crowned with success - but with these actions the troops of the Red Army pinned down the enemy forces, did not allow them to maneuver against our active wings. Finally, in these battles, our central armies accumulated the necessary experience for organizing an offensive, which they successfully applied already at the end of December.

The neighbors of the Western Front were also active in operations. The Kalinin Front in the second half of December developed a successful offensive with its center and left wing in the Staritsa direction. The dividing line with the Western Front: Rogachevo, Reshetnikovo station, Kotlyakovo, Sychevka (all inclusive of the Kalinin Front). The right wing of the Southwestern Front (and from

December 25 - the Bryansk Front) continued offensive operations in the twentieth of December in the Mtsensk, Oryol and Livna directions. As a result of the fighting that unfolded here, our troops advanced significantly (by 50-75 km, counting from the position occupied by December 16) and captured the cities of Chern and Livny. The dividing line between the Bryansk and Western fronts remained the same: Ryazhsk, Malevka, Belev, Dyatkovo (all inclusive of the Western Front). The December period of the actions of the Western Front we have

considered (more precisely, from December 6 to 24) includes, as the main, most important moment, the transition to the offensive of our both wings and the defeat of the German flank strike groups. Thus, the main, leading actions of the Red Army at this stage were of an offensive nature. But this was not an ordinary offensive operation, created in a relatively calm atmosphere of the preparatory period, without serious opposition from the enemy. Our strike was organized during a military storm, matured in the process of a fierce struggle against the Germans, with a rapid change in the situation. This was our **counteroffensive**, that is, an offensive that is a response to the enemy's offensive and grows out of a previously defensive position.

The counteroffensive of the Western Front in December was connected with the active defense that had been carried out before and largely followed from the operational situation in which the Red Army troops found themselves by the end of the defensive battle near Moscow. Our transition to a general offensive on both wings, as we saw, was preceded and accompanied by extremely stubborn and fierce battles with an experienced, strong and skillful enemy, whose goal was to defeat our troops and break through to Moscow.

In these battles, the Red Army was by no means limited to defensive actions. She not only repelled the attacks of the enemy, but she herself counterattacked him, trying to stop the enemy and wrest the initiative from his hands. The starting position with an arched front line, from which our troops went on the offensive, was created as a result of the intense struggle of both sides in the preceding defensive period and, at the same time, as a result of the correct operational foresight of the Supreme High Command of the Red Army (concentration and grouping of reserve armies in place and time) . The aims and objectives of our counter-offensive were of a positive

nature, they had in mind the defeat of the enemy troops and developed consistently in accordance with the development of the situation. The counteroffensive was carried out with significantly increased forces compared to the previous defense, since in addition to the seven armies that previously operated as part of the Western Front, three more new armies from the reserve of the Supreme High Command (over 100,000 soldiers, 600 guns, 100 tanks) and others took part in it. military formations that changed the balance of power in our favor. The counteroffensive began in a new grouping of forces and with a different position of the parties compared to the defensive battle, since the outline of the front had changed significantly by this time and large operational-strategic reserves of the Red Army were brought into action. The defeat of the German flank groupings hanging over Moscow created favorable conditions for our further offensive in order to defeat all German forces opposing the Western Front. Within the limits of this front-line operation (December 6-24), which was saturated with military operations of various nature and content, the most

striking operational events took place on the wings of the front, connected by a stable center. Active operations during this period developed mainly within the wings. We can say that here we had (within the framework of a single large operation) two offensive operations of army groups: the northern group (30th, 1st, 20th, 16th armies) and the southern group (49th, 50th, 10th armies and 1 - 1st Guards Cavalry Corps).

True, these were not in the full sense the operations of army groups (such groups were not organizationally created) - the front command itself directly controlled all the armies and set each of them a very specific task in terms of purpose, place and time. But still, the armies of each wing, in the presence of a common goal of action on a frontal scale, were operationally united (especially in the first period of the counteroffensive) with their own particular goal of action, which followed from the common goal. The tasks that were carried out by these armies were rather closely interconnected within the limits of this wing and were aimed at one common object (the defeat of the northern or southern shock group of the Germans). Front command orders at that time were usually issued separately for one or another wing, and each of them was given a specific operational task. This is one of the characteristic features of command and control of armies at this stage of a front-line operation. Subsequently, as the entire front becomes more active, this well-known independence of wing operations disappears in the general course of the front offensive operation, and we no longer notice sharply defined wing operations.

In the army operations of the December period, we observe a great variety. Here we find the maneuverable offensive operations of the 30th, 16th, 50th and other armies; a kind of oncoming battle (turned into an offensive against the defending enemy) on the front of the 1st and 20th armies; operational pursuit to a great depth of the 10th Army; operational defense and an attempt to break through the fortified front of the enemy with our central armies. In the first period (while the enemy has not yet been broken), there is a closer unification and coordination of the actions of two or three armies to solve one common problem, to concentrate efforts in one direction or to attack one common object. Such were the actions of the 30th, 1st, 20th armies on December 8-15 in the area of Klin and Solnechnogorsk, as well as the offensive of the 50th army, the 1st guards cavalry corps and the 10th army on the 2nd tank army to the east and south-east of Tula.

Subsequently, the enemy begins to retreat, his resistance weakens. Armies get the opportunity to act less dependent on one another and perform independent tasks,

each in its own operational direction (for example, the 49th Army in the direction of Vysokinichi, Detchino, the 50th Army in the direction of Kaluga and Przemysl, the 10th Army

in the direction of Belev). The operational forms in which the armed struggle of both sides took shape were varied. In the course of the development of the operation, they changed and passed one into another (sometimes even during one stage of the front-line operation), while maintaining a certain connection and continuity. So the Germans, using their stereotyped method of action, tried to capture and surround Moscow from both sides, advancing from the flanks with two shock groups. This attempt ended with the fact that both wedges of the Germans, having exhausted their offensive capabilities, had to go on the defensive in conditions when each of the wedges was engulfed by the troops of the Red Army and sought to get out of the coverage by retreat. If we try to very briefly characterize the turning point of the Moscow operation in terms of operational forms, we can to say that here the German wedges fell into the pincers prepared for them, from which they were able to escape with considerable difficulty and with

heavy losses. The offensive of the Western Front resulted in two coordinated strikes, which were delivered by both wings (with a stably defending center) in order to defeat the enemy's flank groupings. The peculiarity of the application of this form of operation lies, among other things, in the fact that our counteroffensive developed from the same areas of the vast front where the Germans delivered their main blow (from the flanks). The Red Army began

its counteroffensive with actions in the external operational areas on the scale of each of the wings. The ensuing defeat and retreat of the German flank groupings led to the escalation of these concentric offensives into the pursuit of the enemy in parallel directions. The success achieved on the wings made it possible to advance them faster than the center. Hence the question arose (which, as we have seen, was expressed in the directives of the command of the Western Front) about pushing both wings forward in order to cover all the German forces that opposed the Western Front. Thus, from external operating directions to

on the scale of each wing separately, the Western Front, through actions in parallel directions, sought to move in the second half of December to a concentric offensive on a frontal scale (external operational directions within the entire front). If we consider the operational

forms in which each of the ten armies of the Western Front operated, then this question will receive further detail, development and clarification. In general, it can be said that the December period of the Moscow operation of the Western Front was distinguished by a variety of operational forms and a rather complex combination of actions in external, internal and parallel directions, on various scales. The main form of the front offensive operation, which both sides wanted to carry out, was associated with the desire for concentric actions (along external operational directions). Offensive battles alternated with defensive ones at different periods and in different sectors of the front. The tension and activity of the

struggle on both sides, the desire to wrest the initiative from the hands of the enemy sometimes led to head-on clashes of various scales. Thus, the reserve shock group of the Germans, moving to Dmitrov and Krasnaya Polyana, sought to cross the Moscow-Volga canal with part of its forces and bypass Moscow from the northeast, and with the other part to directly capture the Soviet capital. At the turn of the Moscow-Volga Canal, Krasnaya Polyana, the Germans were counterattacked by the 1st and 20th armies, which

went on the offensive and had the goal of defeating the German fascist forces that opposed them. The specific course of hostilities (described in the relevant chapter) was such that there were almost no oncoming battles, or they took place on a limited scale. Soon the Germans went on the defensive, and our armies began to attack the defending and then retreating enemy. However, since each of the parties in the period of November 29 - December 4 pursued positive, active goals, set offensive tasks for its troops and sought to reach areas lying behind the front line of the opposite side, this period of hostilities

can be regarded as a meeting battle under peculiar conditions (an atypical case of a meeting battle). Thus, the December period of the front-line operation was full of combat events, very diverse in content and form.

The question of **the reserves** of all branches, as we have seen, played an enormous role in the course of the operation. Ultimately, the fate of the battle near the walls of Moscow was decided in our favor by the reserve armies and other reserves, which the Supreme Commander, having shown great operational-strategic farsightedness and foresight, formed in advance, concentrated in a timely manner in the right directions (mainly behind the flanks of the Western Front) and put into action by the time of the crisis of the

battle. Modern operations of large scale and intensity require large reserves at the disposal of the high command. This is necessary in order to be able to control the development of the battle and the operation in the desired direction, in fact, to control the course of events. The fascist German command underestimated the strength of the resistance of the Red Army and its reserves. It deployed its troops in a line, thus ensuring a wide offensive front and the strength of the first blows. But when these blows did not give the desired results for the Germans, they were forced (having already no free reserves) to go on the defensive, and then retreat under the ever-increasing blows of the Soviet troops.

By the time of the decisive battles, the Red Army received reinforcement not only in manpower, but also in powerful fire weapons (mortars, guards mortar divisions, artillery, anti-tank rifles, etc.). This allowed us to organize more stubborn fire resistance, which caused serious losses in enemy tanks and manpower, and then seize the initiative of action in our own hands. It is also necessary to note the maneuver

of troops and equipment along the front, which was resorted to by the command of the Red Army during the tense days of the December battles. This maneuver of troops along the front was very effective (the transfer of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps to the Kashira region, the build-up of the efforts of the Kaluga grouping and other measures). In especially urgent

In some cases, the transfer of even small units (for example, by platoon from regiments or divisions) was practiced in order to pour them into bloodless units in an important direction or close the gap in the front. The maneuvering of military equipment along the front in the course of the situation (artillery, tanks, etc.) has found wide application.

In order to increase the mobility of our reconnaissance and advanced detachments in winter and to create mobile groups, the front command asked that 20 ski battalions be sent to its disposal.[98]

The conditions that prevailed at the end of December made it possible to more systematically start manning units and formations that had suffered serious losses in previous battles. Therefore, the Military Council of the Western Front decided to withdraw ten rifle divisions and an airborne corps to the reserve for resupplying. To replenish them, the Western Front asked to send him 70,000 private and junior commanding officers (of which 25% were armed). As we have noted before, the command and control of the troops of the Western

Front was clear, rigid and highly centralized. Despite the cumbersome organizational structure of the front (ten armies and the Belov group, directly subordinate to the front command), no intermediate authorities (army groups) were created between the front and the armies. The front commander directly set tasks for each of the armies.

The nature of a defensive battle, in which the initiative belonged to the enemy, left its mark on the methods and methods of command and control. During this period, general orders and directives gave way to private orders and individual orders of one or another of the armies. And it was quite natural. With the beginning of our counteroffensive on the wings, in connection with the need to plan the actions of several armies, along with private orders to individual armies, directives for the armies of one or another wing appear, planning and organizing the actions of a given army group. Finally, when the center has gone over to active operations, general directives are revived on the scale of the front as a whole. However, negotiations were widely used

wires and trips to the troops. Thus, we can note the variety and flexibility of ways and means of expressing the will of the command, depending on the purpose of the actions and the specific conditions of the situation. The harsh

and snowy winter fettered the actions of the troops. The troops were mainly forced to operate along the roads, and the enemy, during the withdrawal, sought to destroy and mine the roads and settlements. The advance of troops in these conditions slowed down, their maneuvering was hampered. This is discussed in detail in the description of hostilities. The political and

moral state of our troops during the counteroffensive was higher than that of the enemy. The feats of arms and heroism of individuals and entire units of the Red Army vividly testified to the patriotic upsurge that engulfed our troops. On the contrary, the mood of the Germans, who at

first confidently advanced on Moscow, where they hoped to find comfortable winter quarters, worsened as a result of stubborn battles that ended in defeat and retreat. The soldiers lost hope for the possibility of a "blitzkrieg" war with the Soviet Union; their faith in the invincibility of the German army was shaken. However, they still retained combat capability, although it decreased due to the defeats suffered.

Conclusion

The transition from defense and withdrawal to the offensive, which was the turning point in December, is one of the most difficult and crucial moments in the operation in terms of troop leadership. Military history is not rich in examples of the successful solution of this difficult task.

The battle near Moscow in December 1941 provides a remarkable example of such a transition from defense to offensive with a decisive goal, which was crowned with great operational and strategic success.

As a result of the December counteroffensive of the Red Army German troops suffered a real, great defeat.

The political and strategic consequences of the defeat of the Germans near Moscow are enormous. It can already be said now that the significance of the victory over the Germans in December 1941 in the general course of a real world war is no less than the significance of the famous victory on the Marne in 1914, which served as a turning point in the war of 1914-1918 and ultimately led to the defeat of Germany. . The next

strategic result of the victory in the Moscow region is the turning point of the 1941 campaign in a direction favorable to the Red Army. Since that time, the Red Army has moved from a strategic defense to a strategic offensive. The myth of the "invincibility" of the German army was finally dispelled, and subsequently the Germans were repeatedly and cruelly beaten on our front. The capital of the Soviet state - Moscow - was liberated from the immediate threat of an enemy attack, just as a significant part of Soviet land was cleared of the Germans. The operational-strategic position of the Western Front improved dramatically, he got out of a cramped state and received the freedom of action he needed. The immediate operational results of the battle we won were also very great. The most important and most dangerous grouping of German troops was severely

defeated. Only during the period of our counteroffensive from December 6 to 25, huge trophies were captured by the troops of the Western Front:

tanks 1098

guns 1434

mortars 530

machine guns

1615 motor

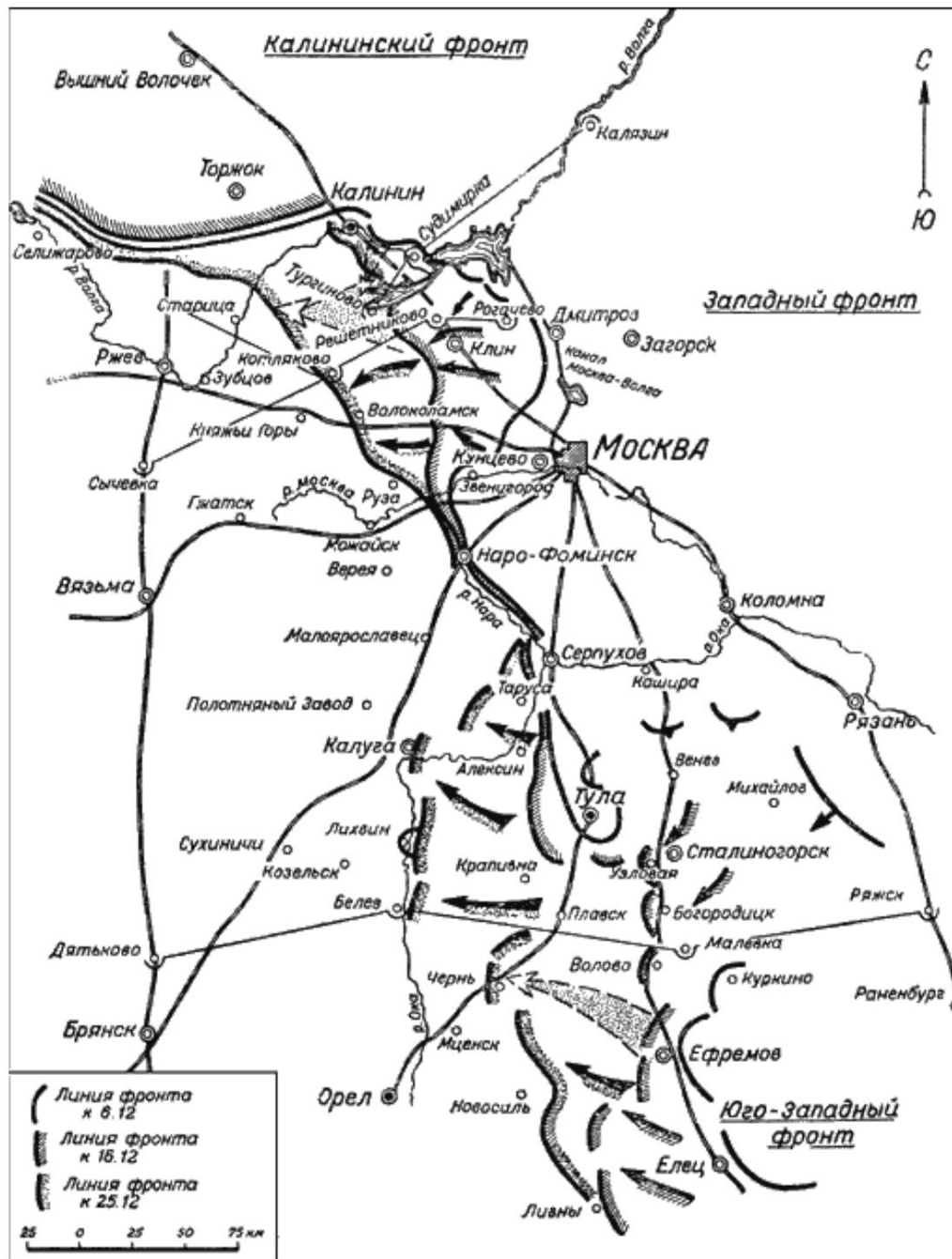
vehicles 2233 motorcycles 1700

Many other military property was also seized. The Nazis lost about 72,000 people killed.[99] If we add to this the wounded and frostbitten, as well as weapons and property destroyed during the hostilities, then the total number of enemy losses will increase even more and in relation to people will be about 250

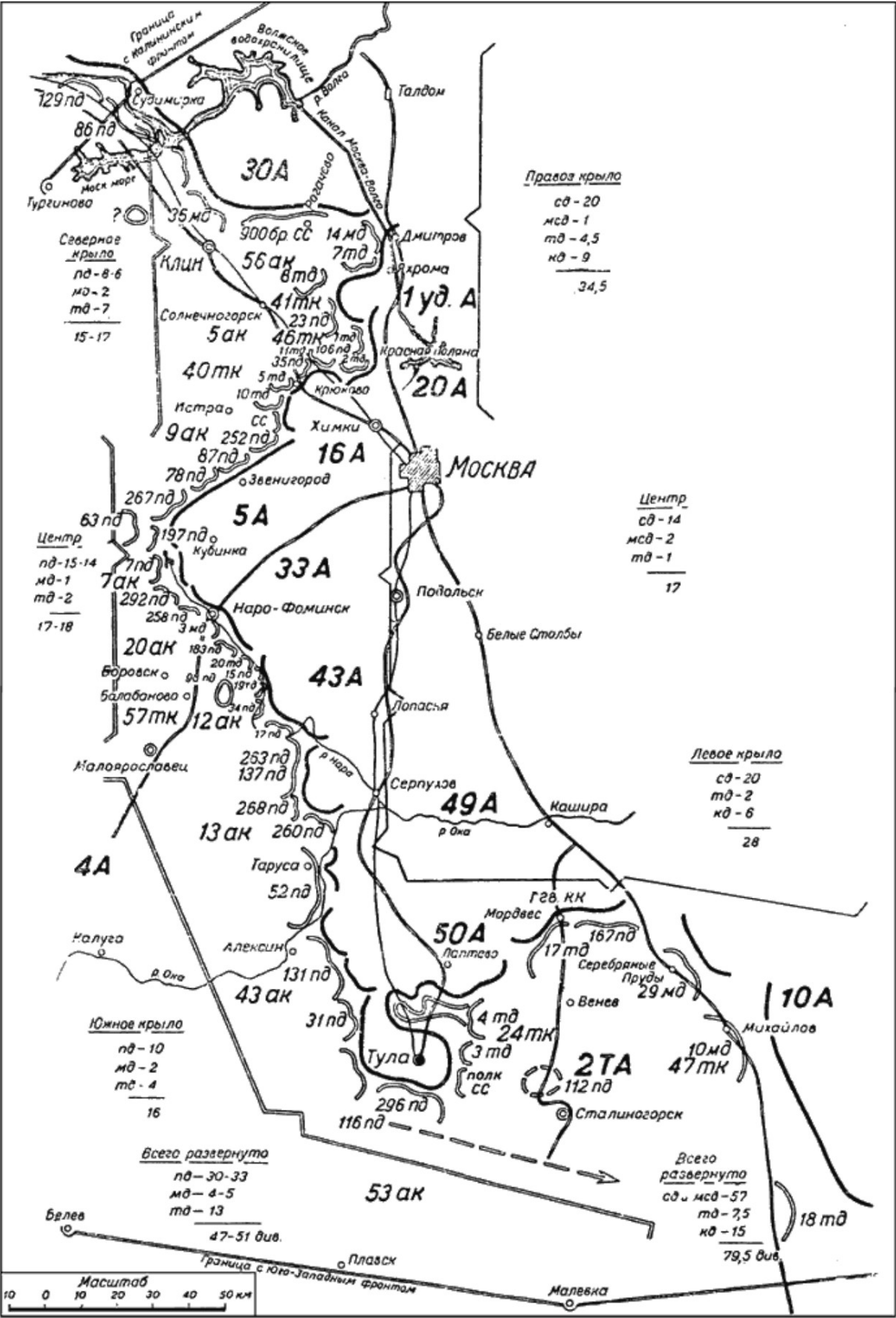
thousands of people.

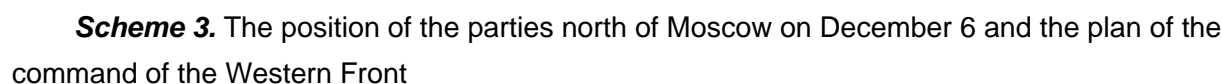
The Great Battle of Moscow is one of the brightest and most exciting pages in the history of the Patriotic War. She will undoubtedly go down in world history as one of the immortal examples of perseverance in the struggle, courage and military art, crowned with a great victory for the Red Army and its leaders over the Nazi troops.

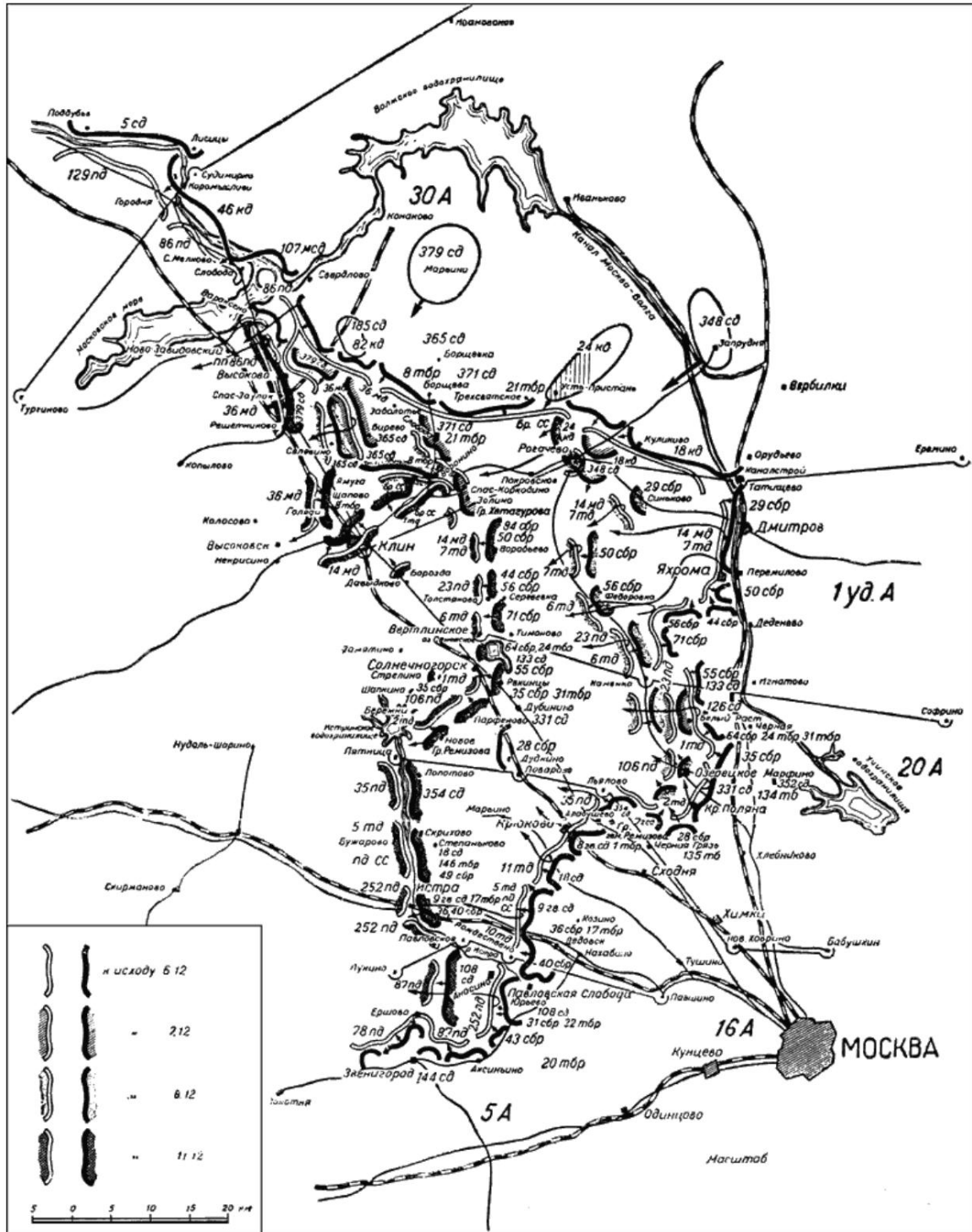
Maps and diagrams for the second book



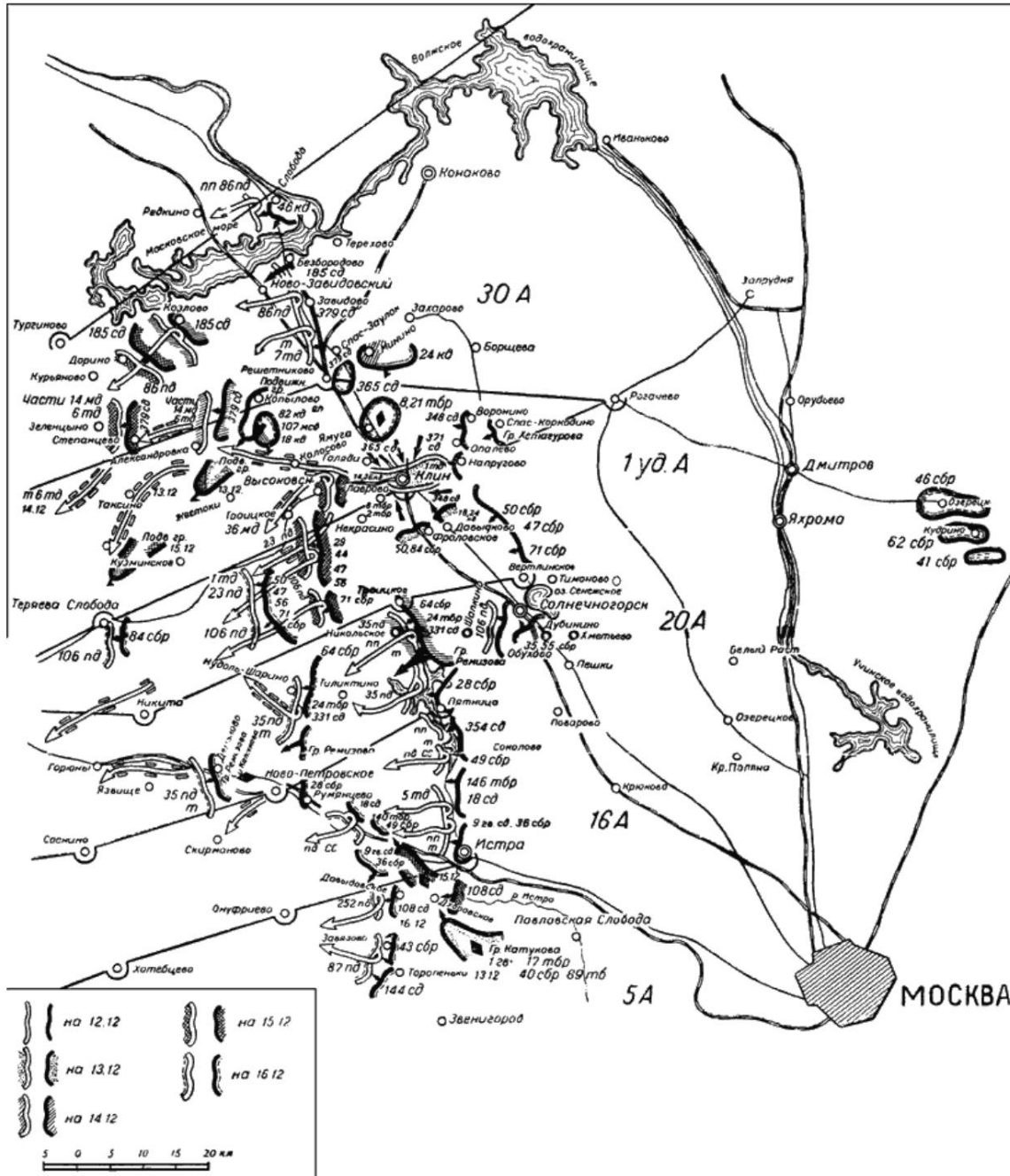
Scheme 1. Changes in the front line in the Moscow strategic direction in December 1941 as a result of the offensive of the Red Army





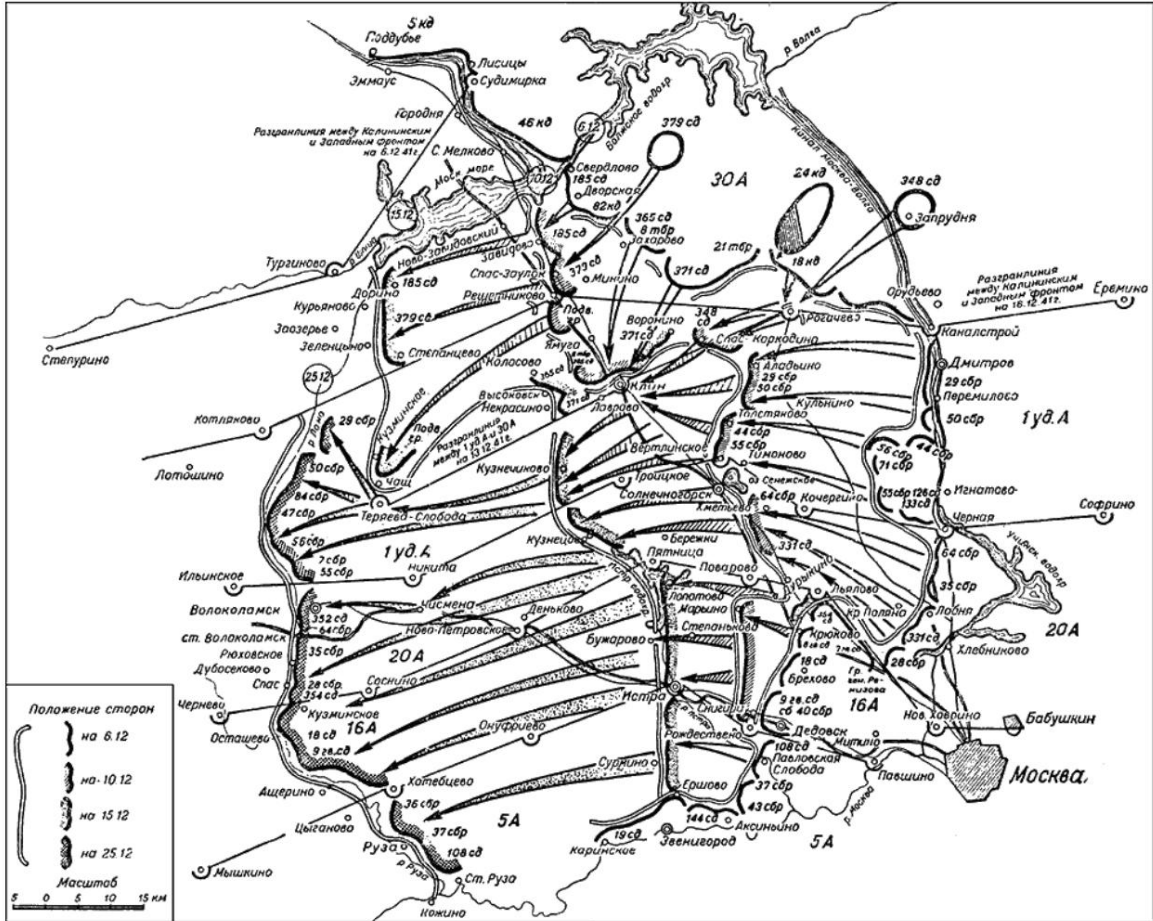


Scheme 4. Counteroffensive of the right wing of the Western Front from December 6 to 11, 1941



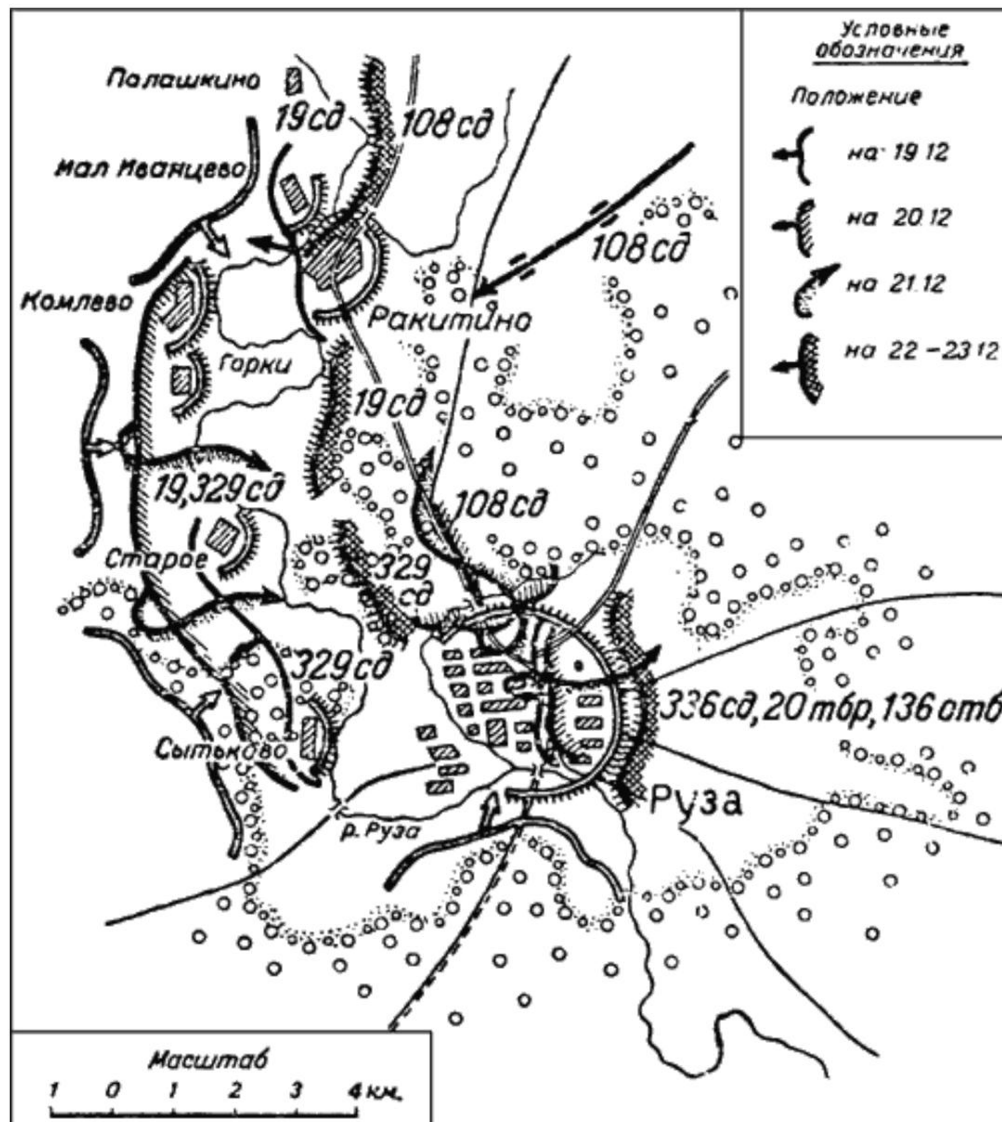
Scheme 6. Offensive battles of the right wing and the capture of the city of Klin and the Istra reservoir on December 12–17, 1941

The capture of Volokolamsk

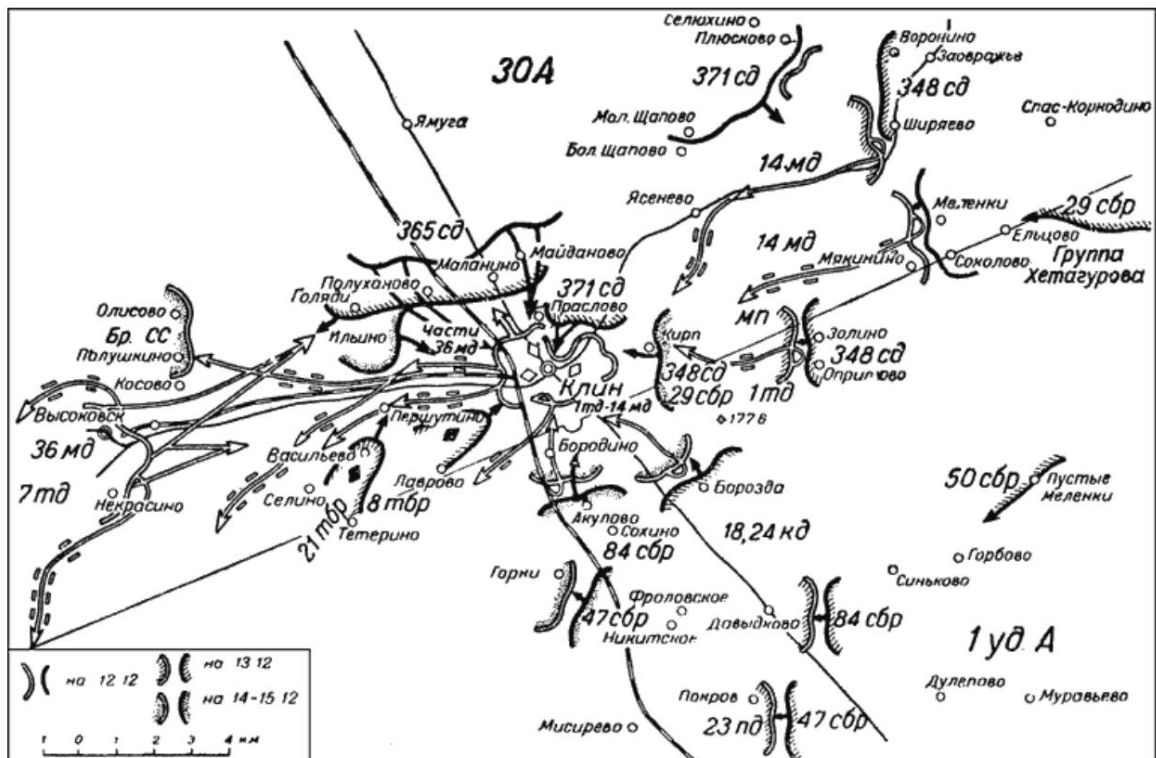


Scheme 8. The offensive of the armies of the right wing on December 6-25, 1941

Scheme 9. Attempts to break through the defensive line of the Germans on the rivers Ruza, Moscow, Nara (December 13–21, 1941)

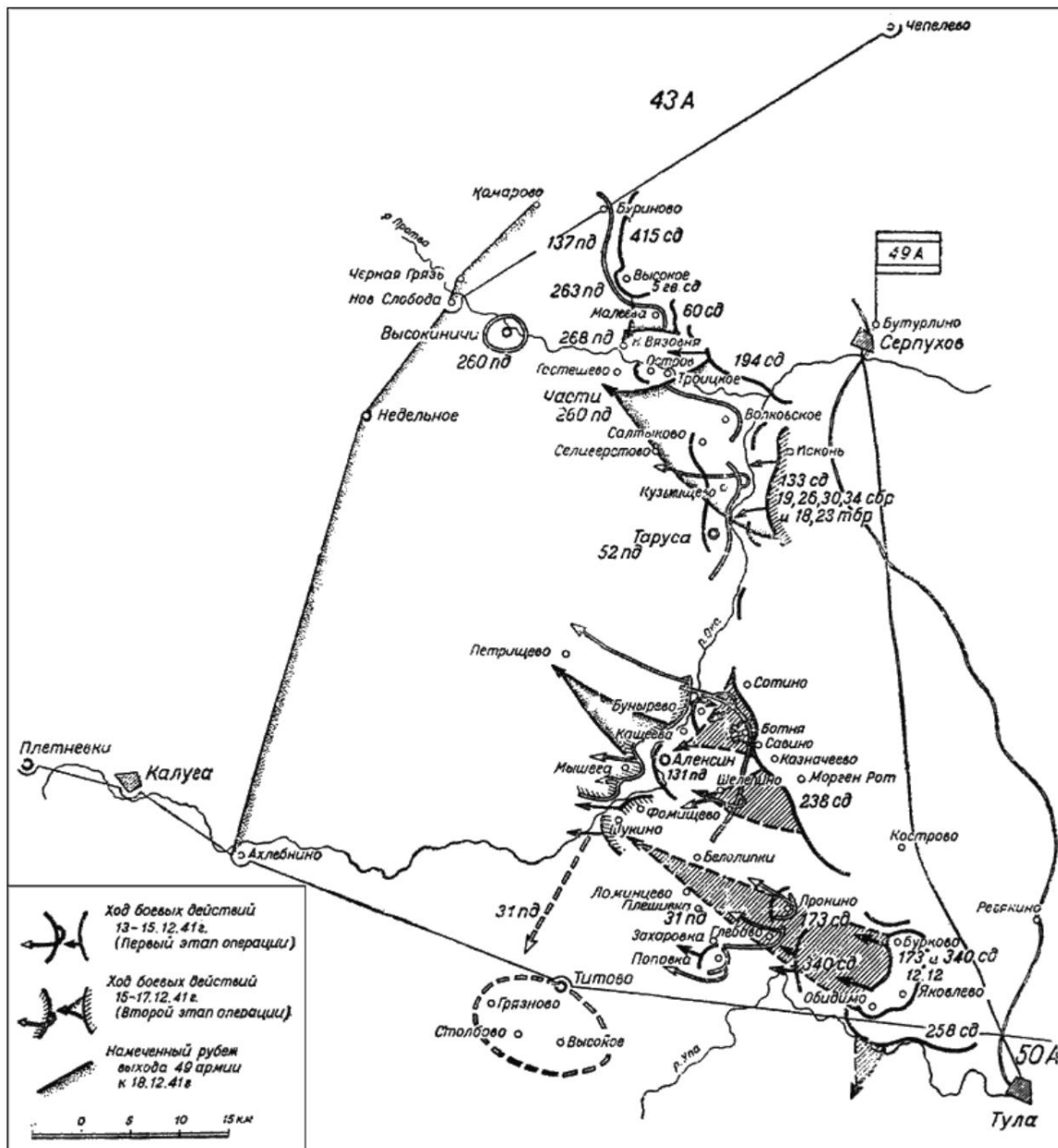


Scheme 10

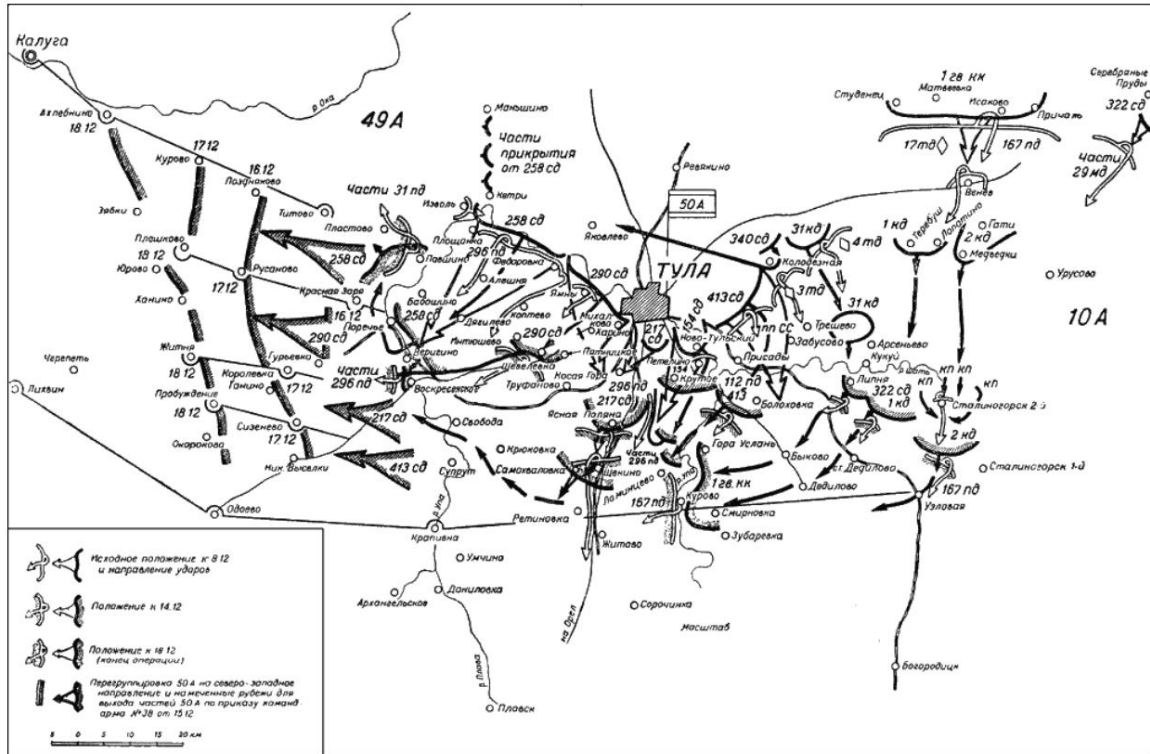


Scheme 11. Battles for the capture of the city of Klin on December 12–19, 1941

Western Front by December 7, 1941



Scheme 13 Combat operations on the front of the 49th Army in the first and second stages of the Tula offensive operation (December 14–19, 1941)



Scheme 14. Combat operations on the front of the 50th Army and the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps in the Tula operation (December 8-18, 1941)

Scheme 15. Combat operations on the front of the 10th Army during the Tula operation (December 7-19, 1941)

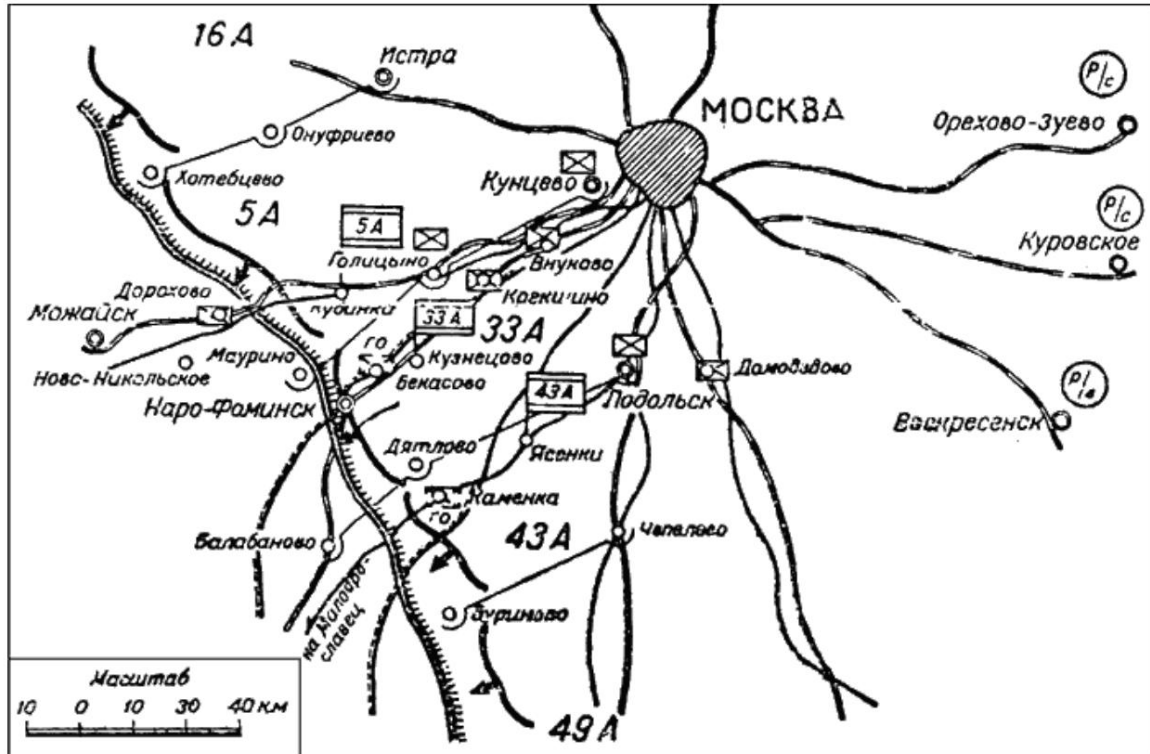
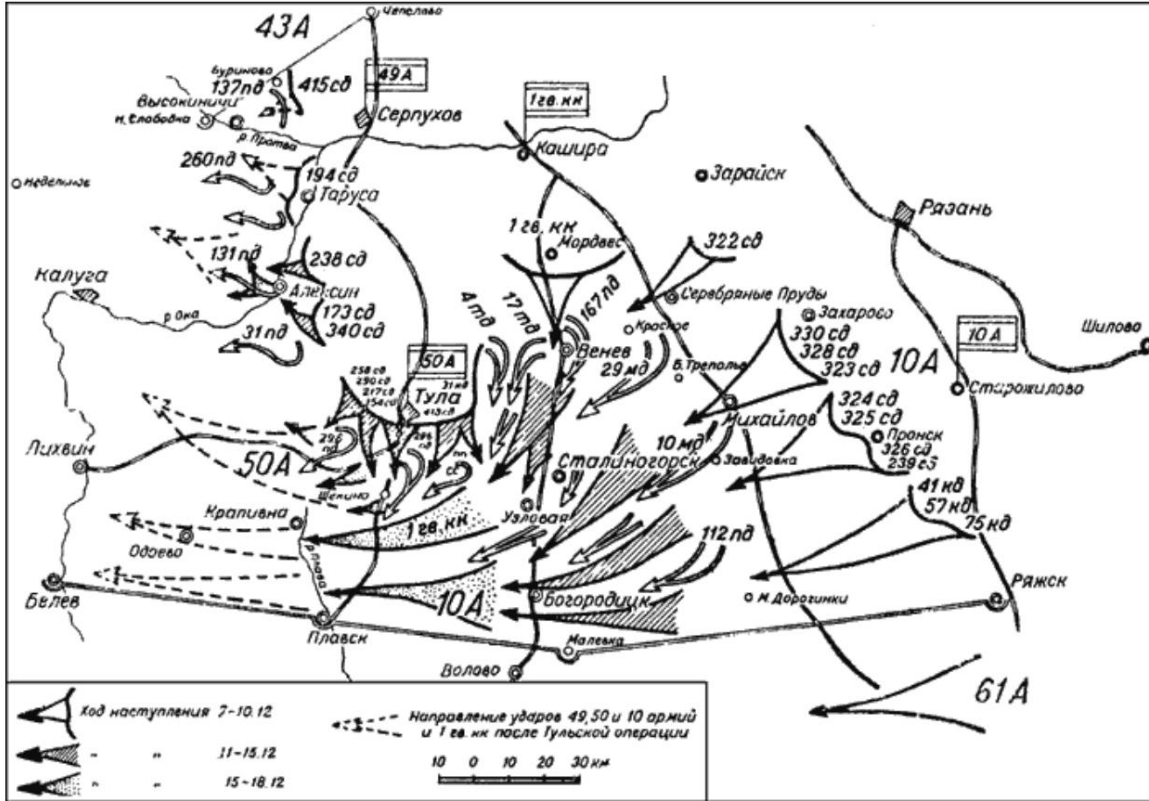
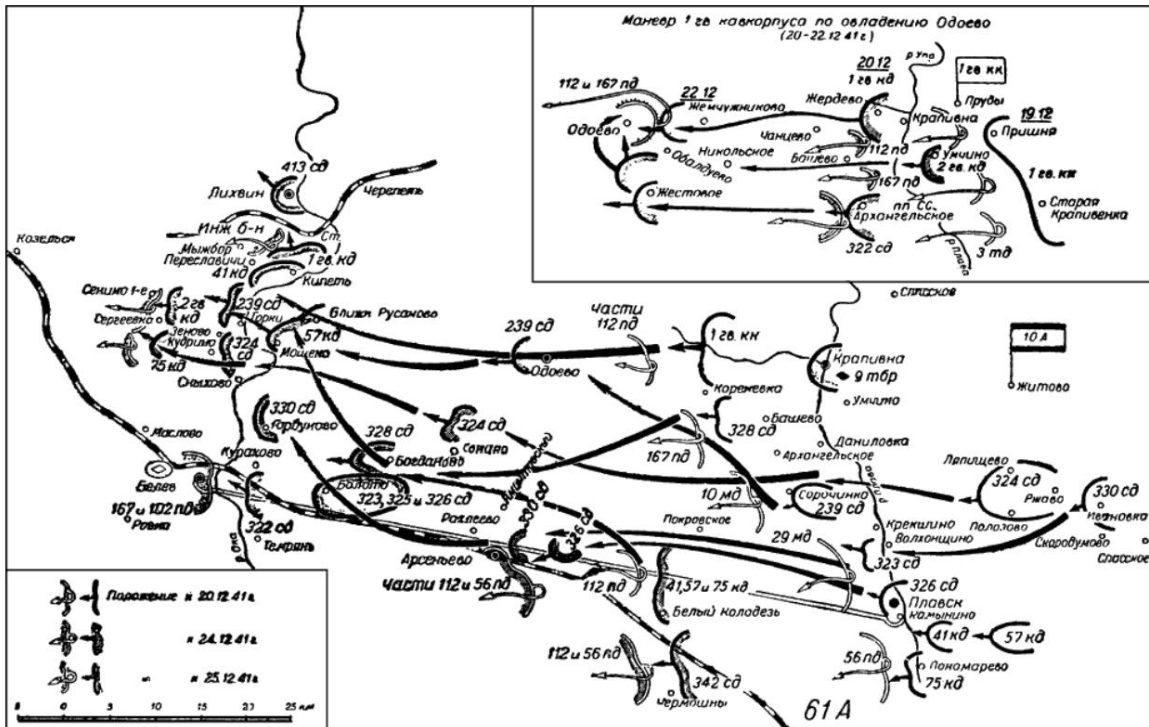


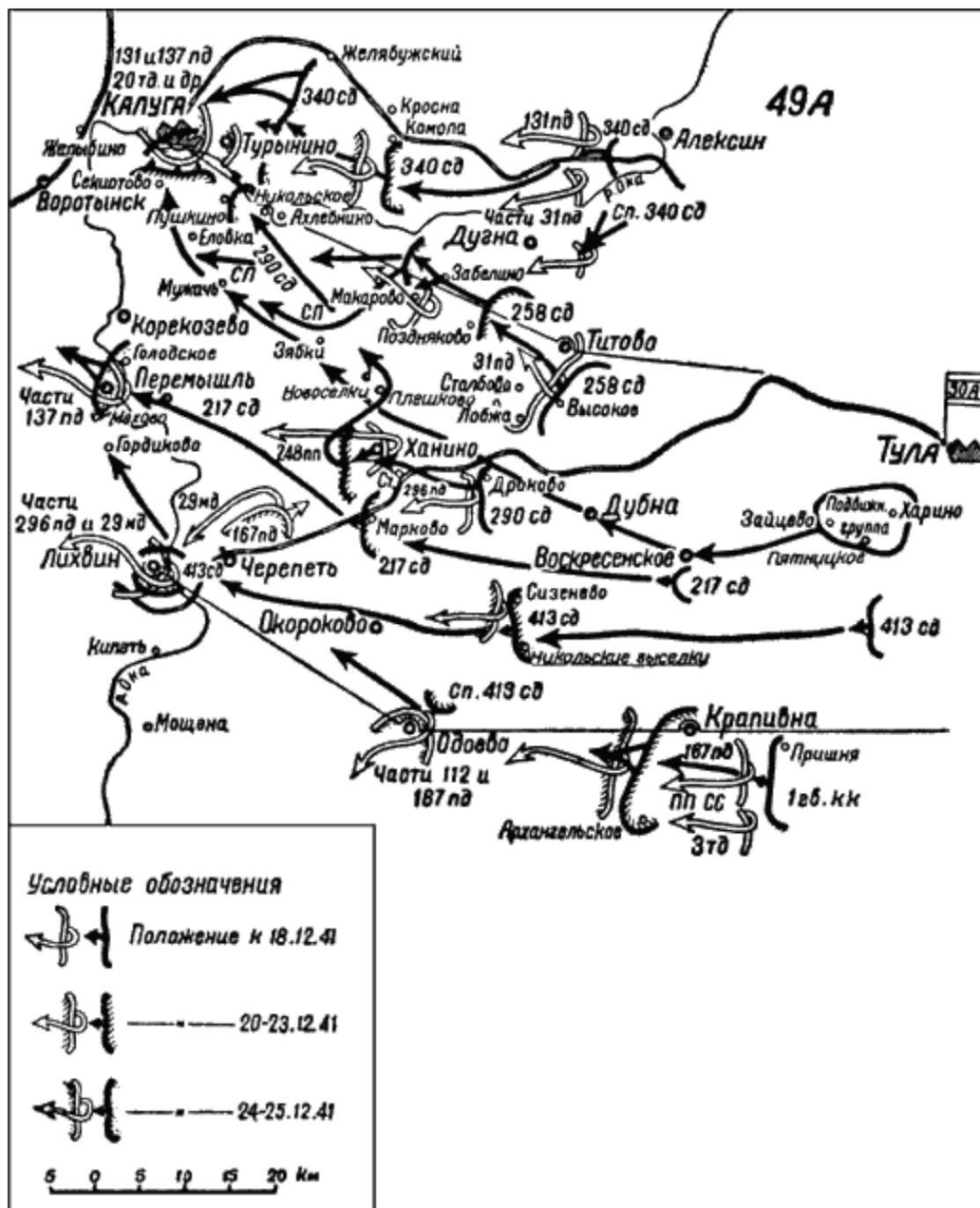
Diagram 17



Scheme 18. The general course of the offensive of the armies of the left wing in Tuls kaya operations (December 7-18, 1941)

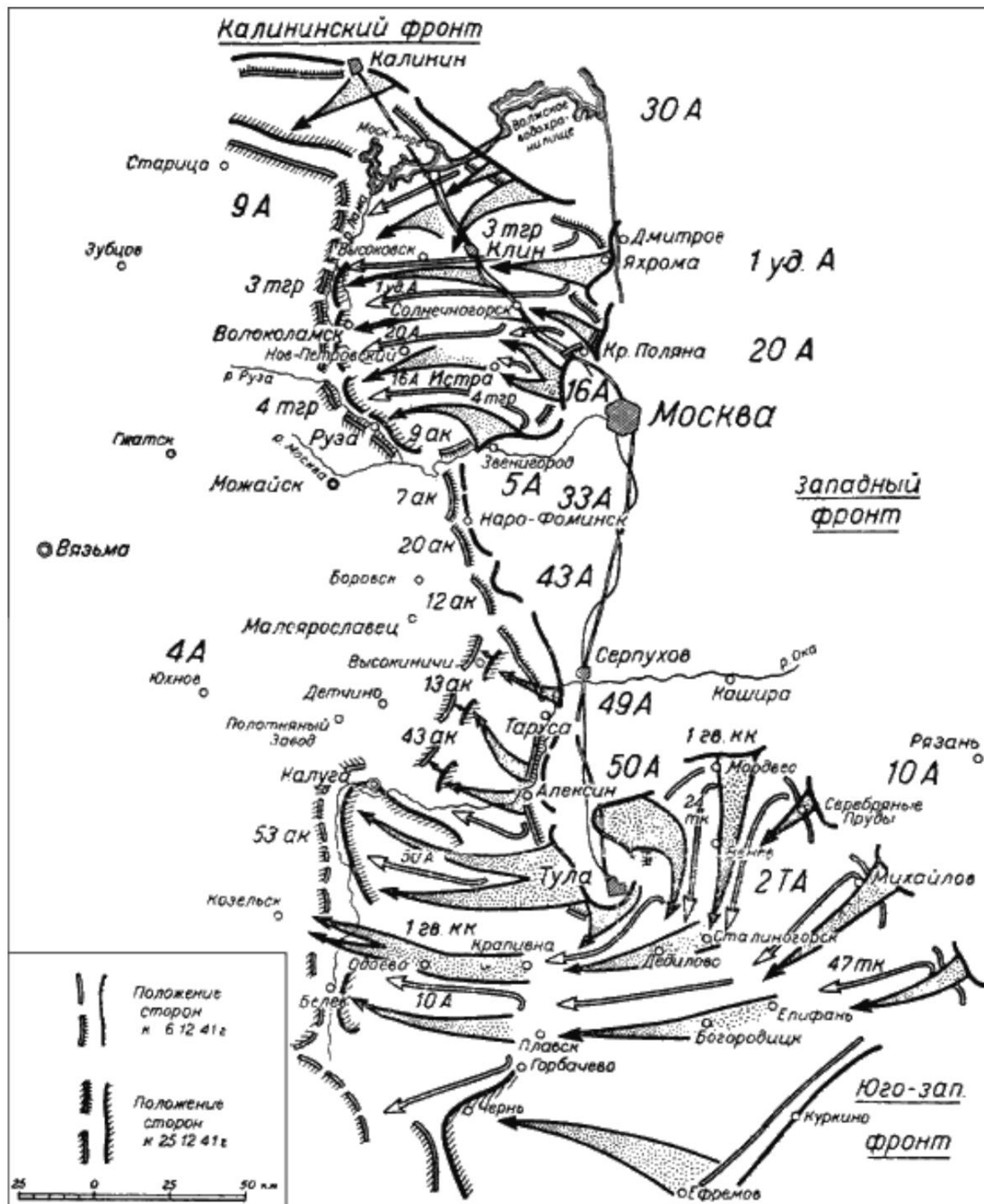


Scheme 19. Combat operations of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps and the 10th Army from December 19 to 25, 1941 (the first stage of the Belevsko-Kozelsk operation)



Scheme 20. Combat operations on the front of the 50th Army from December 18 to December 25, 1941 (First stage of the Kaluga operation)

Scheme 21. Rear situation on the Western Front from December 6 to December 25, 1941



Scheme 22. Counteroffensive of the Western Front in December 1941

to December 25, 1941

Book Three

Part V

**The offensive of the troops of the Western Front from the line
of the rivers Lama, Ruza, Nara, Oka**

(December 25, 1941 - January 31, 1942)

Chapter first

The general situation on the Western Front in early January 1942

After the December defeat of the Nazi troops near Moscow, the remnants of the defeated enemy flank groupings retreated to the west, trying to linger on convenient defensive lines. Such a defensive line, to which the Germans withdrew in the second half

of December, was the line of rivers: Lama, Ruza, Moscow, Nara, then Oka to Kaluga, Belev and south along the Zusha River.

The defense of the Germans was based on a system of strongholds and nodes of resistance in settlements, at crossroads and in other important areas of positions. For the creation of field fortifications with a bunker, the defensive structures that previously existed here were used. Further in the depths, fortifications were

discovered near Shakhovskaya, Sereda, Mozhaisk, Maloyaroslavets, Detchin and to the south. The next defensive line, apparently, was planned by the Germans east of Rzhev and Gzhatsk (Gzhatsk line of defense), then south along the Ugra and Oka rivers. On the occupied line of defense, the enemy offered stubborn resistance and, apparently, wanted to sit out until spring. This is evidenced by the orders of the fascist German command captured by us, as well as the hasty deployment of various units and formations from the depths to organize defense, the strengthening of the defensive line east of Gzhatsk at a pace, the stubborn, many-day struggle for Kaluga and Belev, when our troops in the south crossed the Oka between these points. The main groups of Germans were on the Gzhatsky

direction, as well as in the area of Medyn, Kaluga, Yukhnov.

At the end of December, the armies of the Western Front carried out the tasks previously assigned to them to cover the main German forces opposing the Western Front with both wings of the front. The left wing quickly moved forward, while the right wing stopped at the turn of the Lama and Ruza rivers.

The Stavka's instructions of January 7 provided for the defeat of the main enemy forces located in the Moscow strategic direction by the joint efforts of the Western and Kalinin fronts. To accomplish this task, the

Kalinin Front, having regrouped, was to advance with its main forces in the general direction of Vyazma. The Western Front, carrying out an offensive on the Gzhatsk direction with its right wing, intended to advance towards Vyazma with the armies of the center and part of the left wing (5th, 33rd, 43rd, 49th armies and the Belov group). The successful fulfillment of these tasks by both fronts should have led to the encirclement and defeat of most of the forces of the central group of German armies. The directive of

the Kalinin Front dated January 8, 1942 No. 057 / op stated that the troops of the front, having regrouped, continue an energetic offensive, delivering the main blow in the general direction of Sychevka, Vyazma. By the end of January 11, they have the task of reaching the Sychevka area, intercepting the railway and the Gzhatsk, Smolensk highway west of Vyazma, depriving the enemy of the main communications and, together with the troops of the Western Front, encircling and then capturing or destroying the Mozhaisk-Gzhatsk-Vyazma group of Germans. The

commander of the Western Front, Army General Zhukov, by directive of January 6, No. 0141 / op, entrusted the 20th Army with the task of breaking through in the Volokolamsk-Gzhatsk direction.

“The immediate task of the 43rd, 49th, 50th armies,” stated the directive of the Western Front dated January 8, 1942 ***No. the defeat of the Mozhaisk-Gzhatsk-Vyazma grouping of the enemy.***

Thus, it was planned to defeat the main forces of the Germans with a concentric offensive of two fronts to Vyazma. With regard to the Western Front, the earliest results, apparently, could be expected from the offensive towards Vyazma of our armies of the center and northern

parts of the left wing. Since the twentieth of December, the right wing had almost no advance, meeting the stubborn defense of the enemy. The left-flank 10th Army was stretched out on a wide front, passing in winter conditions from the beginning of the offensive about 350 km; in the middle of January she was close to the limit of her offensive capabilities.

The general course of hostilities on the right wing of the Western Front is presented as follows. At the end of December, the armies of the right wing of the front (1st, 20th, 16th), continuing their offensive, tried to break through the German defenses at the turn of the Lama and Ruza rivers. The offensive was carried out on a wide front, and each of the armies of the right wing struck in its own separate sector, using available

forces and means. But by this time the enemy had already managed to prepare for defense and gain a foothold at the chosen line. The German command, bringing in all kinds of prefabricated and spare parts from the depths, as well as divisions brought in from the occupied territories, was able to organize a strong defense along this line at the time the troops retreating from near Moscow approached the Lama and Ruza rivers. This defense was mainly created on the basis of fortifications and positions built earlier by our and German troops on both

banks of the Lama and Ruza rivers. The desire of the German command to use the old positions operationally was quite natural, since winter conditions did not allow the construction of new defensive lines necessary for securing the retreating troops in a limited time. In their orders, the German command indicated:

“The general situation of hostilities imperiously demands to stop the rapid retreat of our units at the turn of the river. Lama and take up a stubborn defense.

Positions on the river. Lama must defend himself to the last man. Under the personal responsibility of the commanders, I demand that this order of our leader and supreme commander be carried out with iron energy and merciless determination. This crisis must and will be overcome. The question is about our life and death.”[100]

Hitler in his order demanded not to retreat a single step, to defend to the last extreme.[101] By exerting every —

possible influence on its retreating troops, the German command largely managed to stop them, and by the beginning of January the fighting on the right wing of the Western Front had become protracted. The initiative of action remained in the hands of the Red Army, which imposed its will on the enemy. Nevertheless, in some areas, the Germans not only offered serious resistance, but also carried out active operations (expressed in counterattacks and even in attempts to encircle our units). The troops of the right wing of the Western Front,

having reached the fortified lines of the Germans, were forced to stop. After putting their units in order, concentrating equipment and carrying out a number of regroupings, they began a systematic offensive against the enemy who had gone over to the defensive. However, the forces and means of suppression available in each of the

armies were not enough to independently make an operational breakthrough and develop it in depth. Whereas until now the armies of the right wing, advancing on a broad front, pursued the retreating units or fought against the enemy, who had hastily gone over to the defensive and had not yet had time to gain a foothold, now at the turn of the Lama and Ruza rivers they met a well-organized, tough enemy defense. Here, other methods of attack were required. It was necessary to carefully prepare and skillfully organize a breakthrough, concentrating large forces and means of suppression on a narrow front in order to break through the German defenses, and then develop the formed breakthrough in depth and to the sides.

But this, apparently, was not immediately realized. In all three armies of the right wing, at the end of December and in the first ten days of January, repeated attacks were carried out on the fortified positions of the enemy, but they did not give any significant success due to the stubborn defense of the Germans. The battles carried out made it possible to accumulate certain experience and obtain additional information about

the enemy. In this regard, the front command abandoned further attempts to break through the German defenses with the three armies of the right wing on a wide front and decided to switch to the method of breaking through a fortified position with one army on a narrow front, concentrating in this

forces and means of suppression from other armies. As a result, the 20th Army, which was entrusted with the task of breaking through, successfully broke through the German defenses on Lama, and in the second decade of January, our right wing troops were already developing an operational breakthrough and pursuing the retreating German units in the Gzhatsk direction.

A successful offensive was also launched **in the center of** the Western Front. The rapid advance of the left wing of the Western Front in late December and the first half of January favored the development of active operations in the center. As a result of the fighting, Maloyaroslavets was liberated by the Red Army on January 2, and Borovsk was taken on January 4. Troops continued to advance west of these points.

But our subsequent offensive in Medynsko-Myatlevsky direction was met with increasing resistance from the Medynsko-Kondrovo-Yukhnovskaya group of Germans, which covered the Varshavskoe highway and the direction from Kaluga to Vyazma. The fighting in the areas of Myatlevo, Kondrovo, Yukhnov took on a protracted character and continued throughout January. To the north of this area, the offensive of our center was further facilitated by the successful breakthrough of the armies of the right wing of the front in the Volokolamsk-Gzhatsk direction and the withdrawal of the Germans to the Gzhatsk defensive line, which began in the

second decade of January. After December 25, the troops of the armies of the left wing of the Western Front were faced with the task of completing the offensive operations begun in the previous period. The 49th Army, having simultaneously captured Nedelny, developed an offensive against Detchino. The 50th Army fought for Kaluga with its center and right flank, while the left flank divisions advanced in the general direction towards Uteshevo (20 km west of Kaluga). The 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, divided into two groups, one attacked in the general direction of Yukhnov, the other aimed at Kozelsk, having the task of capturing it on December 27th. The 10th Army part of its forces continued to fight for Belev, the rest of its forces advanced in the direction of Kozelsk and to the south.

Thus, the left wing of the Western Front at the end of December moved forward unceasingly, crossed the Oka between Kaluga and Belev and developed a further offensive in the northwestern direction on Yukhnov and in the western direction on Sukhinichi, Kirov. But the enemy, apparently, did not want to throw a defensive line along

Oke - he tried to keep Kaluga and Belev as strongholds on the flanks of our offensive. To the north of Kaluga, the Germans held the Detchino area. The battles for these cities were stubborn and continued for several days. Kaluga was finally occupied by our troops only on December 30, and Belev - on December 31.

Subsequently, the actions of the troops of the left wing of the front developed in the directions: Kondrovo, Yukhnov and Sukhinichi, Kirov. The defeat of the Kondrovo-Myatlyovo-Yukhnovskaya enemy grouping and access to the Vyazma, Bryansk and Varshavskoe highway railroad were the immediate tasks.

The development of the offensive on the left wing of the Western Front took place in reverse order with respect to the right wing. There, as we have seen, our troops during the first ten days of January did not have significant successes, and the main advance of our troops falls on the second half of January as a result of a successful breakthrough of the 20th Army. Here, on the contrary, the troops of the left wing of the Western Front during the end of December and the first half of January advanced rapidly and almost reached the lines at which they found them at the end of January.

So, in early January, Meshchovsk was occupied; there were battles near Sukhinichi, where the German garrison stubbornly held out. On January 7, our units captured Serpeisk and fought for Mosalsk. On January 9, the Red Army entered Lyudinovo, and a day later, Kirov. In the Yukhnov direction, stubborn battles developed with a large group Germans.

In this general operational environment, the actions of the armies proceeded Western Front in the first half of January.

The position of neighboring

fronts In the last days of December, the Kalinin Front developed an offensive in the Rzhev direction, seeking to cut off the retreat of the Staritsa enemy grouping to the southwest with enveloping blows from the north and east. During the period from December 27 to December 31, 146 settlements were liberated by the troops of the front; trophies were captured: 197 guns, 182 machine guns, 415 machine guns, 3890 rifles, 520 vehicles and other equipment. January 1 our troops

occupied Staritsa and continued to pursue the Germans, who were retreating to Rzhev and

Zubtsov. On January 5, the troops of the Kalinin Front were already engaged in offensive battles with a stubbornly defending enemy at a line 15–20 km north and northeast of Rzhev and Zubtsov. The next day, our units, advancing west of Rzhev, intercepted the Rzhev-Velikie Luki railway in the area of Chertolino station. In the following days, the troops of the Red Army continued to advance on Rzhev and Zubtsov, covering this area from the east, north and west. On January 12-13, our units,

developing a strike in the direction of Sychevka, approached this point 8 km from the north-west, reaching the rear of the Rzhev-Zubtsovo-Sychevka group of Germans and semi-surrounding her.

On January 15, the right wing of the Kalinin Front captured Selizharovo and pursued the retreating German units to the south and southwest. In the future, our troops successfully moved forward in the direction of Velizh and Bely, deeply wedged into the location of the German troops. On the left wing of the Kalinin Front, the enemy stubbornly and actively defended the area of Rzhev, Zubtsov, Sychevka and firmly held here, despite the fact that he was surrounded by Red Army troops from three sides.

At the end of December, the troops of the right wing of the Bryansk Front, having met organized resistance and enemy counterattacks in the Bolkhov and Mtsensk directions, went over to the defensive.

In early January, our units repelled German counterattacks and fought for the capture of Mtsensk. However, they did not give decisive results. On January 4-6, the troops of the right-flank 61st Army of the Bryansk Front were regrouping forces, trying to use the advanced position of the left-flank 10th Army of the Western Front in order to reach the flank and rear of the Bolkhov group of Germans through its location. To this end, the 61st Army, leaving a barrier **from** the east along the line of the Oka, transferred its divisions to the north and further through the Belev area to the western bank of the Oka. On January 7, these troops, having

completed the regrouping, went on the offensive from the area west and southwest of Belev, striking at the flank and rear of the enemy Bolkhov group, which was defending the western bank of the Oka.

During January 8–10, intense fighting continued. Our troops partially moved forward, but without significant results due to the stubborn resistance of the Germans. On January 13, the 61st Army was transferred to the Western Front. The dividing line with the Bryansk Front: Ryazhsk, Malevka, Lgovo, the station of the White Coast (all inclusive of the Western Front).

In the future, the right wing of the Bryansk Front occupied its former position in front of Mtsensk and to the south. There were no major events on this sector of the front in January.

Chapter Two

The enemy in front of the Western Front in January 1942

of the year

General assessment of the position of the enemy in early January 1942

As

a **result of the December** defeat near Moscow, the 9th and 4th German armies, consisting of fourteen corps, several separate divisions and groups, rolled back to the west under the blows of the troops of the Western and Kalinin fronts. During the withdrawal, the enemy waged stubborn containment defensive battles, turning into counterattacks in a number of sectors of the front with the support of tanks and aircraft.

By the beginning of January, the Germans, on their northern wing and in the center, with extraordinary efforts and fierce resistance, managed to stop the offensive of the troops of the Western Front and take an advantageous line of defense. This line passed along the western bank of the rivers Lama, Ruza, Nara to Bashkino (10 km southwest of Naro Fominsk), inclusive, then went west of Borovsk and Maloyaroslavets to Detchino, descending to the south west of Kaluga.

On its southern wing, the enemy, under pressure from the 50th and 10th Armies, withdrew to the west and northwest, waging stubborn battles on the intermittent broken line Zubovo (30 km southeast of Yukhnov), Dolgaya (10 km south of Yukhnov), Yukhnov, Mosalsk, Meshchovsk, Sukhinichi, Maklaki (28 km southwest of Sukhinichi), Klintsey, Belev (claim). When

advancing on Moscow, the German command, due to the successful development of the operation, did not provide for the possibility of a deep retreat. According to reports, deep rear lines, although they were outlined, were not sufficiently prepared in advance, and at the disposal of the command of the central army group and the commanders of the 9th and 4th armies there were no free reserves that could occupy a new line of defense and take over rolling front.

Insignificant cash reserves during the retreat were used by the German command to restore the situation, but they could not save him. As a result, the enemy

managed to carry out a systematic withdrawal and create strong shock groups at the expense of reserve units and formations.

Main operational directions and grouping of forces enemy on the defensive

The most important operational directions for the enemy in the zone of action of the Western Front in the first half of January were the following: **1.**

The Volokolamsk-Gzhatsk

direction (against the 1st, 20th and 16th armies) was the most serious and dangerous on the left wing of the Germans. Gzhatsk is a junction of routes leading to Rzhev, Vyazma, Yukhnov, according to its military-geographical position, it covers the most convenient routes to Vyazma and further to Smolensk, Gzhatsk forms the top of the triangle of the enemy's defensive position, the base of which is Rzhev, Vyazma. The capture of the Gzhatsk defense center violated the defensive system of the Germans and made it possible to bypass the Vyazma resistance center from the north.

2. The Mozhaik direction (against the 5th Army) was important for the enemy, since it led directly to Gzhatsk along the shortest distance. **3. The Medyn** direction (against the

33rd and 43rd armies) led directly to Yukhnov and made it possible to bypass the Vyazma center of resistance from the southeast and south.

4. The Yukhnov direction (against the 49th and 50th armies) covered the shortest routes from the east and southeast to Roslavl and Vyazma; it was of great operational importance to the enemy.

5. The Sukhinich direction (against the 10th Army) was also of great importance. Sukhinichi is a railway junction where the tracks coming from Smolensk, Roslavl and Bryansk converge, allowing the transfer of troops and cargo. In the second half of January, due to the

development of a successful offensive by the troops of the Western Front, the most threatened operational directions for the enemy were: **1.**

Novoduginskoye (against the 20th Army) - as the

shortest direction, which made it possible to cover the Gzhatsk center of resistance from the north. The subsequent exit of the 1st Army from the Western Front (the 1st Army was transferred to the North-Western

front) undoubtedly influenced the development of the operation of the 20th Army, which alone, having taken over the sector of the 1st Army, was to conduct a further offensive on the 35-km front (instead of 20 km). By this time, the enemy had strengthened his defenses by introducing new reserves and occupying

advantageous lines. **2. The Gzhatsk** direction (against the 5th Army) led directly to Gzhatsk. However, in this direction too, with the departure of the 16th Army to the southern sector of the Western Front, the zone of operations of the 5th Army increased to 50 km (instead of 20 km), which also influenced the course of the further offensive. The enemy, taking into account the importance of this direction, significantly strengthened its defense capability by bringing in new reserves from the deep rear.

3. The Yukhnovo-Vyazemsky direction (against the 33rd, 43rd, 49th and 50th armies) made it possible to bypass the Vyazemsky fortified area from the southeast and south. The enemy attached great importance to holding the Yukhnov center of resistance behind him and concentrated units of eight divisions in the Yukhnov area on the 75-km front. **4. The Spas-**

Demensky direction (against the 10th Army and the group of General Belov), which threatened a deep bypass of the Yukhnovo-Vyazma grouping of the enemy. In this direction, the enemy sought to retain the Sukhinich stronghold; later, maneuvering with reserve units assembled from different divisions and consolidated detachments, the Germans stubbornly held the line of defense they had occupied, covering the Yukhnov-Roslavl highway.

5. Bryansk direction leading to an important road junction. The enemy fought stubborn battles in this direction, trying to win time, to ensure the strengthening of the defensive line in front of the 61st Army and the supply of reserves from the deep rear.

Usually the German command distributed its forces in accordance with the importance of one or another operational direction. During the December retreat in defensive battles, the bulk of enemy military formations were in the first line. But by the beginning of January this was no longer observed:

a significant number of military formations were withdrawn to the second line. At the same time, there was a slight increase in the total number of formations located in front of the Western Front. If at the beginning

January 9th and 4th German armies numbered forty-three divisions in front of the Western Front, then by January 15 their number increased to forty-eight. Depending on the situation, the

enemy sought to maneuver along the front and from the depth to provide the most important of the threatened operational areas with the necessary forces.

The operational density of the defense was expressed as follows data:

Положение фронта	Ширина фронта 9-й и 4-й армий (км)	Количество дивизий	Средняя оперативная плотность обороны
5 января на рубеже рек Лама, Руза, Нара и далее Детчино, Мосальск, Сухиничи, Белев	470	Всего дивизий 43, из них в первой линии 35, в резерве 8	Одна дивизия на 10,9 км
15 января на рубеже рек Лама, Руза, г. Можайск и далее Медынь, Полотняный Завож, Юхнов, Киров, Жиздра, Мценск	550–585	Всего дивизий 48, из них: в первой линии 38, в резерве 10	Одна дивизия на 12 км
25 января на фронте Васильевское (15 км западнее Князьи Горы), далее по гжатской линии обороны, Юхнов, Киров, Сухиничи, Жиздра, Мценск	615	Всего дивизий 49, из них: в первой линии 34, в резерве 15	Одна дивизия на 12,5 км

Thus, during January, despite the lengthening of the front line, the average operational density of the defense remained almost the same. The width of the front of defense per division of the first line increased on average from 13 to 18 km; consequently, there was a decrease in the density of defense of the enemy's first line. This is due to two reasons: 1) the enemy on the right wing and in the center retreated to stronger defensive lines; 2) by the end of January, the number of reserve divisions increased (from 8 to 15).

The tactical density of the defense of the enemy in different sectors of the front was different. In the strike directions, the German divisions occupied denser areas.

By January 5, the maximum density of defense in the Volokolamsk-Gzhatsk and Mozhaisk directions was: one division per

8 kilometers; the minimum - in the Sukhinich direction - one division per 33 km of the

front. On January 15, the maximum density of defense was in the Yukhnov direction: one division per 6 km; on Volokolamsk-Gzhatsky - one division per 8 km; the minimum tactical density - in the Spas Demensky direction - one division per 29 km of the front.

By January 25, the maximum tactical density of defense moved to the Novoduginsk direction: one division per 5.8 km; there were no changes in Gzhatsky: one division per 8 km; in the Spas Demensky direction, the density remained minimal, but even more rarefied: one division per 38 km of the front. The weak saturation

of the defense front of the southern wing of the 4th German Army made it possible to conduct a rapid offensive by the 50th and 10th armies and the group of General Belov; there was no solid front here, as was the case in the north in the 9th Army. The front line was broken and had a discontinuous character. The Germans in the course of the struggle were forced to throw up separate units and consolidated detachments, tearing them out of the composition of various divisions and even spec

The grouping of enemy forces at different stages of a defensive battle was different and depended on the situation at the front and on the importance of the operational direction. Appendix 1 (see at the end of the book) gives the combat schedule of the German troops by periods. It follows from it that by January 5, the largest enemy groupings were operating in the Volokolamsk-Gzhatsk (13 divisions) and Mozhaisk (10 divisions) directions. On January 15, the most saturated were the Volokolamsk-Gzhatsk direction (13 divisions), Mozhaisk - against the 5th Army (7 divisions) and Yukhnovskoe (6 divisions). By January 25, large enemy groupings were concentrated in the Novoduginsky (9 divisions) and Gzhatsky (11 divisions) directions.

The enemy was constantly striving to oppose the right wing and the adjoining part of the center of the Western Front with the largest forces, which made it possible to delay our advance. This happened due to the fact

that the Germans took into account the danger of the right wing of the Western Front overhanging their left wing, as well as the breakthrough and entry into their rear of the troops of the Kalinin Front west of the Rzhev-Sychevka line. Under these conditions, the German

the command decided to stubbornly hold the area of Rzhev, Gzhatsk, Vyazma, Sychevka.

As can be seen from the combat schedule, the bulk of the defending German troops of the first line were infantry divisions. On January 5, the first line consisted of 25 infantry divisions, on January 15 - 29 infantry divisions, on January 25 - 28 infantry divisions. The basis of the defense of tank divisions was mainly motorized regiments. In more important operational areas (Vолоколамск-Gzhatsk, Mozhaisk, Sukhinichskoye), groups of tanks ranging from 15 to 30 were used. Motorized divisions in the defense were used as infantry formations. Army reserve divisions

were concentrated at various depths from the front line and, as a rule, were located in settlements adapted for defense, as centers of resistance with bunkers, wire fences, ice ramparts, etc. (Gzhatsk, Mozhaisk, Vereya, Yukhnov, Zhizdra) or as hastily fortified strongholds (Sereda, Porechye, Trinity, Kondrovo, Linen Factory, Sukhinichi, etc.).

The combat composition of the troops and characteristics of the

enemy divisions The combat composition of the 9th and 4th German armies on January 5 to operating lines were as follows:

Направления	Ширина фронта обороны (км)	Количество солдат боевого состава	Полевых орудий*	Танков
Волоколамске-гжатское (против 1-й, 20-й и 16-й армий)	75	34100	230	135
Можайское (против 5-й армии)	50	31600	233	40
Медынское (против 33-й и 43-й армий)	65	25300	168	
Юхновское (против 49-й и 50-й армий)	180	33760	252	15
Сухиничское (против 10-й армии)	100	11500	96	10
Всего	470	136260	979	200

* Only divisional artillery guns are taken into account.

The table shows that the two most threatened operational directions against a large grouping of armies of the right wing and part of the center of the Western Front (1st, 20th, 16th and 5th armies) are the enemy

provided the strongest grouping of its troops consisting of: 65,700 soldiers (48% of all forces), 463 field guns (47% of field divisional artillery) and 175 tanks (97% of all available tanks). In the Yukhnov direction, the Germans, not having enough forces and means, were defending on a wide front, grouping up to 25% of all their forces, except for tanks (3%).

By January 5, units of the 2nd Air Fleet, the 8th Aviation Corps, whose headquarters were in Smolensk, were operating in front of the Western Front. Combat strength of aviation: 270 bombers, 95 fighters, 35 reconnaissance aircraft, total 400 aircraft.

Until the end of January, there were no sharp changes in the quantitative composition and location of the 8th Aviation Corps. The airfields were mainly located to the west of the line Pogoreloye Gorodishche, Gzhatsk, Yukhnov. The number of aircraft at the airfields ranged from 8 to 12. Aviation operations were carried out mainly in small groups with the task of covering their retreating troops. At the same time, fascist aviation bombarded our units on the front line and conducted reconnaissance of rear facilities.

The combat composition of the 9th and 4th German armies on January 25, 1942 (according to calculated data):

Направления	Ширина фронта обороны (км)	Количество солдат боевого состава	Полевых орудий*	Танков
Новодугинское (против 20-й армии)	35	14395	115	98
Гжатское (против 5-й армии)	50	31500	239	10
Юхновско-вяземское (против 33-й, 43-й, 49-й и 50-й армий)	200	31350	242	33
Спас-деменское (против 10-й армии)	215	24500	228	12
Брянское (против 61-й армии)	115	12050	105	18
Всего	615	113795	929	171

* Only divisional artillery guns are taken into account. The

table shows that in the most threatened Gzhatsk direction on a front of 50 km, the enemy concentrated more than a quarter of all infantry and artillery. Despite an increase in overall

the number of divisions from forty-three (January 5) to forty-nine (January 25), the number of personnel decreased due to the losses that the Germans suffered in defensive battles and the retreat that followed them.

By January 25, the enemy had almost the same available amount of artillery and tanks in his troops as he had by January 5; this happened as a result of the delivery of several new divisions from the rear and the partial restoration of the artillery equipment lost in battles and tanks.

The table also shows that, compared with the enemy combat strength on January 5, all operational directions, except Novoduginsky, had a small number of tanks by January 25. The operational importance of this direction, as the shortest for deep coverage of Gzhatsk from the north, was clear to the enemy, and therefore it was provided with a stronger tank group. The combat characteristics of the formations of the German

army (operating on the Western Front), compiled according to various sources for January 1942, can be reduced to the following.

Combat characteristics of tank divisions

Tank formations (2nd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 10th, 11th, 19th and 20th tank divisions) have been operating on the Eastern Front since the beginning of the war, except for the 2nd and 5th tank divisions, which were transferred to the Eastern Front in October 1941. During the period of fighting on the Eastern Front, all tank divisions suffered heavy losses and were repeatedly (two or three times) replenished with people and materiel. Losses in the materiel of enemy tank divisions are characterized by the following data: on average, the regular strength of a tank division included from 150 to 200 tanks; with the start of the offensive on Moscow, most of the tank divisions were almost completely equipped with materiel; as a result of the October-December battles, the total number of tanks in all nine divisions in the first half of January was estimated at 250-300 vehicles. Some of them were at the front, some were sent to the rear for repairs. A brief combat description of tank divisions for the first half of January 1942 is shown in the table.

Brief combat characteristics of the enemy tank divisions in the first half of January 1942

Танковые дивизии	Численность людского состава (по расчетным данным), человек	Количество танков	Количество орудий	Степень боеспособности	Дополнительные данные
2-я танковая дивизия	1500-2000	50 (из 200)	—	Оставшийся личный состав полка использовался как пехота. Боеспособность средняя	С 20 января 3-й танковый полк находился на отдыхе в Карманове (южнее Сычевки)
4-я танковая дивизия	Около 2000	58 (из 150). К 15 января оставалось 20 танков	Полностью потеряны	Боеспособность средняя	С 15 января переброшена в Болхов на отдых и укомплектование
5-я танковая дивизия	Около 2500	20	24	Малобоеспособна, политико-моральное состояние низкое	—
6-я танковая дивизия	3000	К началу января потеряла все танки	18	Малобоеспособна	Моторизованные полки отмечались северо-западнее Сычевки
7-я танковая дивизия	2400	50 (из 150)		Боеспособна	—
10-я танковая дивизия	1000	10		Небоеспособна	С января в активных боях не отмечалась, находилась в резерве как пехота

Танковые дивизии	Численность людского состава (по расчетным данным), человек	Количество танков	Количество орудий	Степень боеспособности	Дополнительные данные
11-я танковая дивизия	В ноябрьских и декабрьских боях потеряла большое количество мотопехоты и почти все танки. 30 декабря остатки танков переданы в 5-ю танковую дивизию. Дивизия небоеспособна				Остатки мотополков использовались как пехота в первой линии обороны
19-я танковая дивизия	1500	4 (из 200)	24	Боеспособность средняя	Использовалась как пехотная дивизия
20-я танковая дивизия	3000	60 (из 200)	6	Боеспособна	В январских боях использовалась как резервная дивизия
Всего	17 400	252	72	Из девяти танковых дивизий пять боеспособны, две мало боеспособны, две небоеспособны	—

These combat characteristics demonstrate: 1)
heavy losses of tank divisions during the October-December battles near Moscow as a result of crushing blows from the troops of the Western Front;

2) the drop in the combat capability of the German tank formations, caused by combat failures and major losses in manpower and materiel.

3) the fact that the

German command was forced to make the majority of the tank divisions, which still retained

combat effectiveness, use in defense as infantry units, dispersing tanks in small groups in close cooperation with the infantry.[102]

Combat characteristics of motorized divisions

Моторизованные дивизии	Количество солдат (по расчетным данным)	Количество полевых орудий	Дополнительные данные
3-я	2100	24	Участвовали в боях под Москвой. На Восточном фронте с начала войны
10-я	2500	32	
14-я	3000	10	
25-я	Около 2000	15	
29-я	Около 2000	24	
36-я	1600	20	
Всего	13200	125	

The motorized divisions, despite the heavy losses (from 60 to 70%) in manpower and artillery suffered in previous battles, basically retained their combat capability. These divisions in the January battles on various sectors of the defense front of the 9th and 4th German armies either occupied a defensive sector or were in reserve.

Combat characteristics of infantry

divisions The vast majority of infantry divisions (thirty-two out of thirty-eight) were transferred to the Eastern Front at the end of June, in July and in the first half of August 1941. Six divisions (35th, 63rd, 208th, 211th, 213th and 216th Infantry Divisions) were transferred to the Eastern Front in December 1941 and early January 1942 from Belgium and France. Of the total, seven infantry divisions are personnel, the rest (thirty-one) were formed in the divisional districts of the Reichswehr for mobilization.[103] Due to the heavy losses suffered

during the war, all divisions changed their personnel several times, which could not but affect their condition. However, the predominant number of infantry divisions by the beginning of January still retained their combat effectiveness. Only separate divisions (52nd, 56th, 197th and 267th

infantry), which suffered heavy losses in previous battles (especially in December 1941), turned out to be incapable of combat.

In addition, the severe winter (frost reached 35 °), lice, illness, lack of warm clothes, war fatigue, not always normal food delivery, etc., influenced the political and moral state and the fall in discipline. cases when the officers, in order not to arouse the discontent of the soldiers, were forced to cancel previously given orders. In separate divisions, in connection with the arrival of reinforcements, the officers promised the soldiers that the units operating in the winter (56th Infantry Division, etc.) would be relieved and that the spring offensive would eliminate all difficulties. It must be said that such agitation in January 1942 still had an impact on a certain part of the Nazi army. Along with this, in cases of open discontent among the soldiers (197th and 267th infantry divisions), severe repression was immediately applied. [104] Thus, the combat capability of enemy infantry divisions to

at the beginning of January was as follows:

Пехотные дивизии	Общая боевая характеристика	Всего от общего кол-ва дивизий (в %)
35-я, 63-я, 208-я, 211-я, 213-я и 216-я	Прибыли на Восточный фронт к январю 1942 г. Сохранили боеспособность. Укомплектованы людьми и материальной частью почти полностью	15,7

Пехотные дивизии	Общая боевая характеристика	Всего от общего кол-ва дивизий (в %)
7-я, 15-я, 17-я, 23-я, 31-я, 34-я, 85-я, 107-я, 112-я, 131-я, 134-я, 137-я, 183-я, 230-я, 252-я, 255-я, 258-я, 263-я, 268-я, 296-я, пехотная дивизия СС	На Восточном фронте с июня-августа 1941 г. Понесли значительные потери в силе и материальной части. Пополнялись неоднократно (два-три раза) и к январю получили частичное пополнение. Боееспособны, имеют 60–70% наличного состава	55,2
78-я, 87-я, 98-я, 106-я, 167-я, 260-я, 292-я	На Восточном фронте с июня-августа 1941 г. Понесли крупные потери и неоднократно пополнялись. К январю получили незначительные пополнения. Имеют до 50% наличного состава и мало материальной части. Боееспособность невысокая	18,5
52-я, 56-я, 197-я и 267-я	На Восточном фронте с начала войны. Вследствие крупных потерь, усталости от войны и других причин настроение солдат подавленное. Дивизии небоеспособны.	10,6
Всего : 38 пехотных дивизий		100 %

It should be added that during the October and December battles of 1941, regiments were increasingly disbanded due to heavy losses. Separate divisions had two regiments instead of three, and regiments had two battalions.

The general nature of the enemy defense

The general principles of the defense of the 9th and 4th German armies against the troops of the Western Front basically corresponded to the charter provisions.

In connection with winter conditions and the changed nature of hostilities, the formation of enemy defenses had some peculiarities. When attacking Moscow, the German

command planned a number of defensive lines in its rear. In some places (for example, beyond the Ugra River), reconnaissance noted enemy trench work even before our counteroffensive. By early January 1942

in the immediate rear of the 9th and 4th German armies, the general contours of the defensive line along the line of Rzhev, Gzhatsk, Vyazma and further to Bryansk were already determined. The German command tried, hiding behind strong rearguards with tanks, to hold back the pressure of our troops in order to gain a foothold on the line of Lama, Ruza, Nara and further on the line Maloyaroslavets, Sukhinichi, Belev with the main forces. The defense in the northern sector was partly based in the old trenches, ours and the Germans, built back in the period of the October battles on both banks of the Lama and Ruza rivers.

From the captured orders for enemy military formations (23rd Infantry Division) it is clear that the positions on Lama and to the south were to be defended to the last man. Hitler gave similar instructions in his order, demanding "to cling to every settlement, not to retreat a single step." The defensive line, for which the 9th and 4th

German armies clung, on January 5, basically passed along the western (and in some places along the eastern) banks of the Lama, Ruza and Nara. On its northern flank and in the center, the enemy carried out a tough defense; on the southern wing - fought containment battles, turning in places into counterattacks.

The enemy defense system during this period was built on the principle of organizing strongholds and centers of resistance, the base of which in winter conditions were settlements. The defensive position of each formation consisted of company strongholds and battalion resistance centers with gaps between them. The latter were covered by a system of flanking cross machine-gun fire, mortar battery fire and submachine gunners; in some places the gaps were filled with snow trenches and snow (watered) ramparts.[105]

The interaction of enemy firing structures in the system of a company stronghold was created by strong machine-gun, automatic and mortar fire in the main directions. A company stronghold basically had two or three platoon defensive areas, and, in turn, each platoon defensive area had two or three firing points. The rear was the most poorly protected place of the strong point.

The depth of the battalion resistance center is 1.5 km, the depth of the company stronghold is 500–750 m. The enemy infantry divisions occupied

in defense on important and dangerous directions 8–10 km; on less threatened - from 12 to 15 km. However, there were cases of taking up defense with a front width of up to 20 km (98, 258, 31 and other infantry divisions). In such cases, such divisions were reinforced by artillery or infantry from another formation. The fire system mentioned above was quite widely supplemented by field-type engineering fortifications.

The firing points were located in stone or wooden structures adapted for defense, as well as in wood-earth snow points specially built for this purpose and in snow trenches. All enemy installations in the vast majority of their design were light field buildings. The enemy made extensive use of thermal insulation in dugouts located along the main lines of communication. In these dugouts, the Germans with machine guns and machine guns sat out until the moment of the attack; with the beginning of the attack, they ran out and took up positions in the nearby trenches and firing points. Enemy company strongholds were often located on high ground; the terrain in

front of the leading edge was clearly visible and allowed for a good shelling. Firing points were sometimes located on the reverse slopes, at a distance of 150-200 m from the crest of the height, and strong points with circular fire were often encountered. For fire weapons, the enemy widely used several spare positions; machine gunners, submachine gunners and individual guns, moving from one position to another, created the impression of a large number of forces on the defender.

Large settlements and cities were equipped by the enemy as centers of resistance, and the defense system was built on close fire interaction of strong points. The approaches to the nodes of resistance and the gaps between the strongholds were covered by a system of barriers. The roads leading to the stronghold and the node of resistance were mined. The Germans widely used mining in defense. Thus, in January, over 7,300 anti-tank and anti-personnel mines were destroyed by engineering units of the Western Front in different areas of the defensive line. Inside settlements, mines were placed on streets, squares, in public buildings, residential buildings and in outbuildings.

buildings. So, for example, when leaving Naro-Fominsk, the enemy mined a textile factory, the square in front of the monument to Lenin, the area of workers' barracks (100 minutes); in Medyn, ditches on Kirov Street, barricades and all exits from the city were mined (183 mines). In the intervals

between the strong points, a poorly developed wire network, slingshots, inconspicuous obstacles made of smooth wire, wire fences on pole stakes and other equipment options were used.

The groves located in the depths of the defense turned into anti-tank defense areas (ATDs), which were surrounded by a line of trenches and covered by anti-tank defense guns. An anti-tank ditch sometimes came off in areas where there were dangers of tanks. The enemy in defense often used "surprises" in various forms.

When conducting a defensive battle, the enemy shifted the center of gravity to holding the tactical defense zone, using for this purpose the force of a previously prepared fire system. With concentrated rifle and machine-gun fire, artillery fire, mortars, machine guns, he sought to destroy the advancing units even before they approached the front line. In the event of a breakthrough of the forward edge and the invasion of our attacking units into the depths of the defensive zone, the Germans carried out counterattacks with regimental and divisional reserves on the flanks of the tactical breakthrough with a strike in the direction of the center of the breakthrough on the forward edge. When the situation was favorable, and the advancing troops were weakened and disordered, counterattacks were also used in front of the main line of defense. With a deeper penetration of the attacking units into the defensive zone and the threat of a breakthrough of the tactical zone (6-8 km), the corps and army reserves delivered a counterattack. Thus, the formations of the first line of defense, which occupied the defensive zone, gave the full and maximum tension of forces and means, and only when they were exhausted, deeper reserves were brought into action. Behind the first defensive line, 8–10 km away, was the second. This defensive line was discontinuous and included separate strongholds or centers of resistance, partly occupied by corps reserves.

The third line of defense of the 9th and 4th German armies was located 18-20 km from the front line. It passed along the line of Knyazhy Gory, Shakhovskaya, Sereda, Porechye, Mozhaisk, Vereya, Medyn, Kondrovo, Linen Factory, Yukhnov; in front of the front of the 50th and 10th armies, the enemy had a discontinuous line of defense, fought defensive battles on a wide front and, apparently, did not have a line prepared and fortified in advance. Such

settlements as Shakhovskaya, Sereda, Porechye, Mozhaysk, Kondrovo, Linen Factory, etc., were turned into strongholds with snow trenches dug between them, light dugouts and bunkers. The gaps between the strong points (just as in the first line of defense) were shot through by flanking fire of all kinds; on the main, most threatened axes against the 20th, 16th, 5th, 33rd and 49th armies, the enemy erected artificial ice ramparts in places. In the area of Medyn, the Germans, during the withdrawal, quite thoroughly destroyed the highway Maloyaroslavets, Medyn; almost all bridges were blown up, partly mined. On parallel roads, the enemy set up a fairly large number of obstacles. Settlements east of Medyn (Aduyevo, Ilyinskoye, Podsosino, etc.) were fortified as company strongholds. In a significant part of the forests, the enemy managed to fill up the passages, braid them with wire and mine them. This greatly hampered the actions of our advancing units and required a lot of time, effort and means to overcome the barriers. The army reserves of the 9th and 4th German armies were located on the indicated line of defense: the 106th and 85th infantry divisions, the

remnants of the 10th tank division (which was being completed), the 107th and 230th infantry and the 20th tank division. The first rear main defensive line of the central army group passed along the line of Ostashkov (140 km northwest of Rzhev), Bely, Yartsevo, Yelnya, Bogdanovo, Zhukovo, Bryansk. Field-type fortifications were built on this rear line. The general defense system in January included the defensive line Rzhev, Gzhatsk, Vyazma, the Zanoznaya station (30 km north of Kirov). This line

was strongly strengthened by a system of strongholds and centers of resistance. In the Gzhatsk area in early January were concentrated

the reserves of the central army group - the 63rd and 255th infantry divisions, located 80-90 km from the front

line. On January 15, the general enemy defense system on its northern wing remained almost unchanged. In the center, German troops fought defensive battles along the lines of Vereya, Linen Factory, Yukhnov, on the southern wing - at the turn of the station Zanoznaya, Olshanitsa, Zikeevo, Melekhova, Fedinsky, Mtsensk.

By this time, the defense was already a more reinforced and developed system of strongholds and centers of resistance. The German command,

having set itself the task of holding the triangle of Rzhev, Gzhatsk, Vyazma at all costs, feverishly erected field-type fortifications here and concentrated troops of the 3rd and 4th tank groups and separate infantry divisions (5th, 7th and 9th Army Corps). By mid-January, the enemy had strengthened his resistance by increasing the number of divisions of the first line, trying to hold back the ever-growing pressure of the armies of the Western Front.

By January 25, the general defense system of the 9th and 4th German armies was an even more developed network of fortifications. The divisions of the first line fought stubborn defensive battles at the Vasilyevskoye line (12 km southeast of Pogoreloy Gorodishche), Tresely, Batyushkovo station, Azarovo, Vyazishcha, Koshnyaki station, Plyuskovo (25 km southwest of Kondrov), Yukhnov, Zimnitsy (6 km southeast of east of Fomin), Podpisnaya station (7 km southwest of Kirov), Sukhinichi, Polyudovo (10 km northeast of Zikeev), Ktsyn, Ploskoye, south of Belev and further to Mtsensk. On

their northern wing and partly in the center, the Germans succeeded, relying on a more developed system of strongholds and centers of resistance, to delay the further advance of the 20th, 5th and 33rd armies. This was also facilitated by the fact that the right wing of the Western Front allocated part of its forces from its composition to another direction. The total length of the defense line of the 9th and 4th German armies increased by almost 150 km compared to the beginning of January, but the enemy managed to pull up new reserve divisions, pull separate units from the front and create rather large reserves in the main, most threatened operational areas,

especially strong in the Gzhatsk direction (four infantry, one motorized and one tank division). The 197th Infantry Division, as having

lost its combat effectiveness, was assigned to the Gzhatsk region to be put in order. The remnants of the 52nd and 56th Infantry Divisions occupied secondary sectors and were incorporated into other divisions; The 267th Infantry Division was withdrawn to the Vyazma region for staffing. On their southern wing against the 10th and 61st armies, the Germans continued to conduct

containment battles on a wide front. In the Sukhinichi area, the enemy's Zhizdrinskaya grouping consisting of the 208th Infantry Division, the 35th Tank Regiment (4th Tank Division) and the 691st Column (up to an infantry battalion) fought stubborn battles, trying to break through to connect with the Sukhinichsky garrison.

The operational formation of the German defense consisted of: 1) a tactical defense zone with a total depth of 6 to 8 km (sometimes 10 km); it included divisional and corps reserves, the latter forming at the same time the second line of defense; 2) a strip of army reserves 18–20 km from the front line; this zone constituted the third

line of defense and was a combination of strongholds and centers of resistance in fire communication; 3) a band of army group reserves 60-80 km from the front line, which was also fortified by a discontinuous system of strong points and was occupied by

military formations in the most important directions;

4) and finally, in the area of the first rear defensive line (the area east of Smolensk), usually at the junction of a well-developed road network, at a distance of 150-200 km from the battle line, there was a front-line reserve. However, it must be borne in mind that

the Germans had few reserves, and essentially everything was based on the defense of the tactical zone.

Ways of

communication By the beginning of January 1942, the enemy managed to change part of the railways to the European gauge by means of great effort. In the zone of operations of the 9th and 4th German armies, both tracks were changed on the Minsk-Smolensk-Vyazma line, one track was changed

on railway sections: 1) Vyazma-Mozhaisk, 2) Smolensk-Roslavl-Bryansk, 3) Bryansk-Orel. However, for the

operation of these lines, it was necessary to transfer from Germany not only rolling stock, but also railway workers. The delivered rolling stock, which was structurally very outdated and worn out, was very diverse: the attendants were predominantly German, while the majority of the rolling stock was assembled from the occupied European countries. The capacity of the rebuilt roads is small: on double-track railways it did not exceed 20–25 pairs of trains per day, on single-track railways - about 15 pairs of trains. The reasons lie in the rather low

technical condition of these roads, in the shortcomings of the constructed bridges, in the absence of inter-station communication, traction equipment, power plants and water supply. In addition, frequent partisan raids had an effect, which is why in a number of sections the movement of trains was carried out for less than a day. There were enough highways and dirt roads in the front line of the German armies. The main rear routes were: 1) Mozhaisk-Gzhatsk-Vyazma-Smolensk, 2) Maloyaroslavets-Medyn-Yukhnov-Roslavl, 3) Orel-Bryansk-Roslavl-Smolensk. The maneuver of the

troops along the front was provided by the roundabout routes: a) Rzhev - Zubtsov - Gzhatsk - Yukhnov

- Sukhinichi - Zhizdra; b) Rzhev-Vyazma-Mosalsk-Meshchovsk-Lyudinovo; c) Sychevka - Dorogobuzh - Yelnya - Roslavl.

During the withdrawal of the German troops in the front line, vehicles were largely used, despite the great difficulties in its operation in winter, the lack of fuel and the huge loss of trucks.

The plan of the German command

The operational situation of the German troops in January was difficult. The German command sought by all means to restore order in the retreating troops and delay the offensive of the Red Army. Hitler in his order gave the following instructions:

“To cling to every settlement, not to retreat a single step, to defend ourselves to the last bullet, to the last grenade, this is what the current moment requires of us.

Each populated area occupied by us must be turned into a stronghold. Surrender to his opponent should not be allowed under any circumstances, even if he is bypassed by the enemy.

If, nevertheless, by order of the higher command, the point should be left by us, it is necessary to burn everything to the ground, blow up the furnaces.

To reinforce the 9th and 4th German armies were transferred from France: in December - the 16th Infantry Division, in January - the 208th, 211th and 213th Infantry Divisions. In these divisions there was a lack of officers, poorly trained contingents of soldiers and a shortage of weapons. In addition to the divisions transferred from the deep rear, front-line reserves (63rd and 255th infantry divisions) and individual units taken from other sectors were thrown up. These reserves were used to restore the situation in the operational directions threatened for the Germans. In addition, the remnants of individual divisions (52, 56, 197 and 267th) were hastily reduced to regiments, the remnants of regiments - to battalions and poured into more preserved formations. The remaining material part of the tank divisions was partly used at the front, partly assigned to the rear for

immediate recovery.

Along the way, groups of reservists were hastily thrown up from the rear to complete the most battered, but still retained a certain combat capability of the divisions. In the course of the battle, consolidated detachments and groups were created (groups of Chevalieri, Kuno, etc.).

In early January, the plan of the German command included the task at all costs to stop the further retreat of the exhausted and bloodless units of the 9th and 4th German armies, pressed by the Kalinin and Western fronts, to take up a convenient defense and gain time to prepare the defensive line of Rzhev, Gzhatsk, Vyazma, Zanoznaya, Bryansk. The enemy made extensive use of individual pockets of resistance (Yukhnov, Sukhinichi) in the most important threatened areas and fought stubborn containment battles in other sectors of the front.

The largest concentration of retreating fascist troops was observed in the area of Sychevka, Gzhatsk, Vyazma, and also in the area of Yukhnov.

Conclusions 1. The general position and condition of the German troops in front of the Western Front in January 1942 were unfavorable for them. Having suffered heavy losses, the enemy was no longer capable of active operations. The initiative of action was in the hands of the Red Army.

2. In the January battles, the enemy, given the threat of envelopment of both flanks, tried on his northern wing and in the center to hold on to a number of intermediate lines, withdrawing the main forces to the west, initially to the line of the Lama, Ruza, Nara rivers, and then to the line of Rzhev, Gzhatsk and to the south. On its southern wing, the enemy sought to prevent our units from reaching the Maloyaroslavets-Roslavl highway in order to ensure the withdrawal of their main forces.

It should be noted that, despite the difficult conditions of the struggle, the enemy managed to restore the combat capability of his troops and to for quite a long time to secure a line along Lama, Ruza and to the south. Thus, the enemy won about three weeks of time and brought the Rzhev, Gzhatsk, Yukhnov line into a stronger defensive state. 3. Due to the heavy losses suffered by the 9th and 4th German armies in December - January, and insufficient replenishment, the German command was

forced to resort to disbanding individual regiments and reducing some divisions to two-regiment, and regiments - from three-battalion to two-battalion.

However, the width of the combat sectors of the troops remained almost unchanged, which could not but lead to a general weakening of the defense.

In addition, by the beginning of January, the German divisions and regiments in organizational and staffing terms had long ceased to correspond to those full-blooded divisions that in June 1941 treacherously

invaded the USSR. The troops of the 9th and 4th German armies, instead of the 300,000 soldiers prescribed by the state, had about 142,000 soldiers. total 262 tanks. Finally, the divisional artillery instead of 1960 guns consisted of 979 guns. And this means that the 9th and 4th German armies in infantry and artillery suffered losses from 50 to 56% in the course of previous battles. Panzer divisions lost 61.5% of their tanks. At the end of January, as a result of heavy defensive battles for the enemy and a large number of frostbite, losses in manpower and materiel increased even more.

4. The political and moral state of the German troops in front of the Western Front in January was characterized by the following data; a) the difficult operational situation created for the Germans at the front; b) heavy losses suffered by the German troops as a result of withdrawal from Moscow; c) severe winter with frosts reaching 30–35°; lack of provision of troops with warm uniforms, lice, exhaustion, fatigue, undermining faith in a quick victory for Germany.

All this led to a decrease in the combat capability of the German troops.

Chapter Three

Attempts to break through on the right wing of the Western Front in late December and early January

In the previous chapter, a description of the German defense was given. in

January. This kind of defensive lines had to be overcome by the troops of the right wing of the front, which included the 1st shock, 20th and 16th armies. As

mentioned above, the Germans, along with the construction of new defensive structures, primarily used the ready-made fortifications that were available at different lines. So, for example, positions on the Lama River were equipped with them using structures built there by our troops before the November withdrawal (section Uzorovo, Novinki). The composition of the German troops by the beginning of

January was shown in the table (see above). As for the balance of forces of the parties, this time the Red Army had the overall superiority. The correlation of forces in separate directions and sections was different in different periods. These data are given below, in the appropriate places in the description.

In late December - early January, the armies of the right wing continued to carry out the task previously set by the front command of destroying the enemy at the line of Lama and Ruza and further offensive in the direction of Gzhatsk, Vyazma, which in the directive of the front commander No. 016 / op of December 20, 1941 was expressed as follows :

"1. The enemy continues to retreat in front of the armies of the right and left wings of the front, in the center he stubbornly defends himself, trying to prevent his defensive zone from being breached. 2. The immediate task of the armies of the front is to continue the non-stop offensive, by the end of December 27, reach the front of Zubtsov, Vasyutina, Zlatoustovo, Gzhatsk ... 3. I order:

front claim. Zheludovo, Burnt Settlement, Kuchino. By the end of December 27, capture Sychevka, Novoduginskaya with a mobile group.

Delimitation line: on the right - Rogachevo, Reshetnikovo, Kotlyakovo, Zubtsev (all lawsuits) [106] , on the left - to the former Pesochnya,

then the Pomelnitsa junction. b) Commander 20 - by the end of December 22, the main forces of the army will go to the front claim.

Kuchino, B. Cool, Mikhalevo. Mobile group, interacting with the 16th army, capture G

The demarcation line on the left is the old one up to Zlatoustovo, then

Novoduginskaya. c) Commander 16 - by the end of December 22, the main forces of the army will reach the front of

Panyukovo, Astafyevo, Galyshkino. The demarcation line on the left - to Gzhatsk is the same, then incl. Art. Meshcherskaya..."

By this time, the course of the fighting on the right wing of the front began to be strongly affected by the nature of the actions of the enemy, who had switched to a stubborn defense at the line of Lama and Ruza and was bringing up new forces in order to more firmly cover the Gzhatsk direction.

Attempts by the 1st, 20th and 16th armies at the end of December to break this defense were not successful, and our troops remained at the lines reached by the end of December. Strong fire of all types of weapons, wood-and-earth fortifications, counterattacks, aviation - all this was used by the Germans against our advancing units. Such a result of the actions of the armies during this period was partly due to the fact that the troops, by inertia, continued to advance directly on the enemy's fortifications. In his directive No. 016 / op, General of the Army Zhukov pointed out this shortcoming to the commanders of the armies as follows:

"In a number of cases, frontal attacks on settlements fortified by the enemy continue to take place, which only leads to unnecessary losses and a slowdown in the pace of the offensive.

I order you to strictly demand from the chiefs of all levels to take the enemy's fortified knots, bypassing them and not delaying the forward echelons of the battle formation moving forward.

In addition, the size of the armies by this time was small - during the December battles, the units suffered significant losses, which noticeably weakened them.

The nature of the enemy's defense demanded great stubbornness and perseverance in the offensive from the armies.

The right-flank 1st Shock Army conducted stubborn attacks against units of the 3rd Panzer Group, which was defending the line of Maleevo, Kruglovo, Gavrilovo, Brenevo, Chekchino.

The German troops, acting against the army, held the Lotoshino region, covering the valley of the Lob River from the northeast near Maleev, the area of Lake. Round, and then their front line of defense went along the eastern bank of the Lama River to Alferevo.

The most important directions of this section: a) Maleevo, Lotoshino (Lob river valley), b) Shubino, Vorobyev (Gorodnya river valley) and c) Suvorovo, Lotoshino (bolshaki) - were covered by them quite reliably. The area of Brenevo, Chekchino, Shubino, where the front stood out in the direction of our troops, was most firmly held. The Germans, as was established by all types of intelligence, in front of the army front, occupied the following position.

The troops of the 3rd Panzer Group were defending: the 36th Motorized Division - Maleevo, Kruglovo, Gavrilovo; 2nd Panzer Division - Brenevo, Chekchino, Matveykovo; 53rd motorized regiment - Telegino, Shilovo; 23rd Infantry Division - Yaropolets, Alferevo.

In the depths, in the Vorobyev area, units of the 14th motorized and the remnants of the 7th tank divisions were noted, the headquarters of the 3rd tank group was in the Knyazhya Gory area.

In total, thus, in front of the army there were up to four divisions. The numerical

composition of the units of both sides by this time was approximately equal - the German troops and units of the 1st Army suffered heavy losses as a result of continuous fighting. The operational density of each side was expressed as: one division per 9 km (counting three rifle brigades per division) and 3-4 guns per 1 km of front. The exit of the 62nd, 44th and 46th rifle brigades to the Lob River

and Lake Krugloye and the concentration of the 55th, 56th and 71st rifle brigades in the Vladychino area made it possible for the army commander to organize an offensive in converging directions with a common goal mastery of the Lotoshino area.

The lack of forces and the desire to provide at least the first blow to break through the German defenses forced the army command to keep all formations in one line. At the same time, the left wing of the army held the front 6–8 km northwest of Volokolamsk, which made it necessary to cover this direction with strong enough units to fend off possible enemy counterattacks in order to capture Volokolamsk.

Due to the fact that parts of the Kalinin Front (30th Army) were located to the north, the command attached special importance to the fighting on the Lob River (as you know, the Germans often organize counterattacks at the operational junctions of formations). Consequently, both the right

and left wings of the army, in addition to the combat missions performed, had, in essence, the second responsible tasks - providing junctions with the troops of the Kalinin Front and covering the Volokolamsk direction (junction with the 20th Army). The successive advance of both wings of the army at the end

December was not successful.

Commander of the 1st Army, summing up the actions of the army for the last days of December, reported to the Military Council of the front:

“Attacks by army units conducted on December 27 - January 1, 1942 did not give the expected results. The units, unable to suppress the enemy's fire defense system, suffered significant losses. So, on December 30, 1941, there were 612 people killed and wounded; for 31.12 - up to 400 people. An attempt to break through on the front of Gavrilovo, Brenevo was also unsuccessful - the units suffered heavy losses from enemy fire. The reasons for

unsuccessful attacks were: 1. Tough defense of the enemy, with a highly developed system fire and its stubborn counterattacks.

2. Insufficiency of means of suppression both in brigades and directly in army artillery, especially howitzer.

3. Losses and continuous six-day stay in the field created a strong fatigue of the personnel.

Despite this situation, the army continued the offensive and in subsequent days of January.

So, on the night of January 2, the 62nd rifle brigade again knocked out the enemy from Terebetovo (abandoned by the brigade on January 1) with a night attack and continued to fight with its separate groups that retreated as a result of the brigade's attack in Maleevo, Karlovo.

From the morning of January 2, the units fought on their former lines, without any significant success. The next offensive was scheduled for 4 January. The order of the commander of the 1st Army stated: ***"The 1st shock***

army on 4.1.42, the main grouping of the right flank, sequentially captures Brenevo, Kruglovo, the Brenevo, Gavrilovo, Maleevo highway and by the end of the day reaches the line of Maleevo, Gavrilovo, high. 155, 1, Chekchino.

In response to our attacks on January 1–2, the Germans on the night of January 3 launched a series of counterattacks against the center of the army, but were repulsed by our fire.

In order to clarify the location of the enemy's defense, especially its front line, on the night of January 3, small groups of reconnaissance submachine gunners were sent. On the same night, the 62nd Rifle Brigade repulsed the German attack from Maleevo, and the 50th Rifle Brigade from Plaksino.

There was no active action on the afternoon of 3 January; our troops put themselves in order, continuing to prepare for the offensive. In some areas, local battles were fought to improve the starting positions. The numerical composition of the units by this time was extremely small. So, in the 29th rifle brigade there were: in the 1st battalion - 181 people, in the 2nd battalion - 33, in the 3rd battalion - 60, and in total, together with the combat strength of special units, 849 people; in the 55th rifle brigade: in the 1st battalion - 88 people, in the 2nd - 104 and in the 3rd - 92 people, up to 700 people in total. The 84th, 47th, 56th and 50th rifle brigades were in a similar composition.

On January 4, the 1st shock army launched an offensive from 10:30 with the aim of capturing the villages of Kruglovo, Gavrilovo, Brenevo. This offensive, met with heavy enemy fire, was not successful and was resumed on 5 January.

41st Rifle Brigade, with the support of two tanks and an army artillery group, consisting of the 1st, 5th and 38th separate

guards mortar battalions and the 701st cannon artillery regiment, with the assistance of the 46th and 50th rifle brigades, using the firepower of the 29th rifle brigade, after artillery preparation went on the offensive. By 4 p.m., under heavy enemy artillery fire, parts of the brigade reached the barbed wire on the northern outskirts of Brenevo, but could not advance further. Having lost 420 men killed and wounded during the offensive, the brigade withdrew to its original position.

At the same time, the 46th Rifle Brigade was advancing on the left flank of the shock group, but due to heavy fire from mortars, artillery and tanks dug into the ground, it did not advance. The offensive of the brigade units was also hampered by the presence of minefields, which were located on the outskirts of enemy positions.

Consequently, during this period of time, the army's attempts to break through the German line of defense were inconclusive.

After the offensive battles of January 4–6, units of the army continued to wear down the enemy with the actions of reconnaissance groups, and these groups operated mainly at night. As a result of reconnaissance, it was clarified that the eastern and western banks of the Lama River were the most fortified lines with a defense depth up to Spas-Pomazkino. In parallel with the reconnaissance, the troops were preparing

for the general offensive of the right wing of the front, which was supposed to begin in the sector of the neighboring 20th Army.

The offensive here was similar to the offensive of the 1st Army. In late December and early January, stubborn battles were fought on the front of the 20th Army to improve their positions or starting position for conducting private offensive operations aimed at one common operational goal - breaking through the enemy's defensive line. However, the attempts of the 20th Army to advance on the entire front in the limited composition in which it was by that time did not lead to positive results. As early as December 23, the front commander indicated to the army commander: ***“Contrary to the instructions of the Front Military Council to break through the enemy’s defenses***

on a narrow front, the 20th Army is attacking on the entire front of the army and, as a result, has no success.

I order: to make a breakthrough in the area of st. Volokolamsk with the strike group leaving for the Khovan, Dubrovino area ... "

Private regroupings of forces, carried out by the army commander in accordance with this directive, did not ensure the fulfillment of the assigned tasks. The insufficiently clear organization of the battle also had a negative effect on the success of the army. The order to the troops of the front No. 0137 / op dated January 1, 1942 said on this occasion:

"... as a result of poor organization of the battle, units are pushed on the spot, are not successful and suffer heavy losses ...

... reconnaissance in the main directions of attack commanders with commanders of formations were not made ...

... The commanders of formations, regiments with commanders of attached reinforcements also did not carry out reconnaissance on the ground, confining themselves to conversations at headquarters ... "

The army until January 1 remained at the same line and could not make a breakthrough to the west.

On January 1, the 20th Army continued the offensive with its right flank, waging intense battles on the entire front. Parts of the Remizov group repelled three enemy attacks from the direction of Zubovo, Timonino, where the Germans began to show activity.

Army troops tried to capture the village of Sidelnitsa. Some units managed to break into its streets. However, as a result of the battle, the settlement remained with the enemy.

On the night of January 2, the army continued to fight fierce battles, especially stubborn on its right flank; units of the 6th Panzer Division of the enemy tried to restore the defense along the Lama River with counterattacks in the direction of Sidelnitsa, Zakharino, Timonino.

Katukov's group with the 1162nd regiment of the 352nd rifle division, the 1st battalion of the 1160th rifle regiment and the 64th rifle brigade fought a fierce battle for Birkino (up to 40 enemy soldiers and officers were killed in this battle), but no success had.

By 12 o'clock on January 2, the 331st Rifle Division captured Khvorostinin, clearing it completely of enemy machine gunners. Katukov's group continued to attack Birkino together with units of the 331st Infantry Division, but these attacks were also unsuccessful.

On January 3, fighting continued on the entire front, especially stubborn on the right flank for the former points - Timonino, Birkino. On this day, the approach of enemy reserves to the front at Spas-Pomazkino and Zubovo was marked. In connection with the activity of our units, enemy aviation began to intensify its activities and on January 3 at 14 o'clock it bombed and fired at army troops in the Timkovo and Ivanovskoye regions. In addition, the areas of concentration of our reserves - Volokolamsk, Vozmishche -

were also shelled with machine-gun fire. On January 4, units of Katukov's group and the 331st Rifle Division occupied Birkino, and at 1400 hours on January 5, Katukov's group captured Ananyin, continuing the attack on Aksenovo and Zubovo; in Ananyin, up to a German infantry battalion was destroyed. On the same day, the 331st Rifle Division fought on the outskirts of Posadinka (this point and Ludina

Gora were defended by two battalions of the 35th Infantry Division). Thus, on January 4-5, some units of the army achieved insignificant success in certain areas. Subsequent attempts to build on the success failed. So, on January 6, the 35th Rifle Brigade tried to attack Posadinki and Ludina Gora, but due to the strong resistance of the enemy, the attack was not

The offensive of the 16th Army had a similar character, which, according to the initial plan of the front command, was supposed to break through the enemy defenses in the Gzhatsk direction.

By decision of the army commander, General Rokossovsky, the army struck with the right flank and by the end of December 24, its main forces were to capture the Vnukovo, Baboshino, Milyatino line, and the cavalry-mechanized group struck at the flank and rear of the enemy at Prozorovo, Lisavino, Star. Traction with its further development to Gzhatsk. The distribution

of forces in the breakthrough sector: •

The strike group of the 16th Army, consisting of the 354th Rifle Division, the 40th Rifle and 146th Tank Brigades, from 9:00 on December 24, was supposed to break through the enemy defense front in the Chertanovo, Ostashevo sector and reach the Ruza River, in the future - with a blow to the flank of the enemy, take Terekhovo, Fedosino, cutting off his

escape routes to the west and south-west; • The 2nd Guards Cavalry Corps was supposed to enter the gap in the Chertanovo, Ostashevo sector to strike

Prozorovo, Lisavino, Star. Thrust.

These actions, due to the stubborn defense of the Germans, were not successful, and the end of December on the front of the 16th Army was characterized by unsuccessful attempts by units of the army to attack the enemy, who was defending on the line of Ruza.

The following operated in front of the army front: the 5th Panzer Division (reinforced by the remnants of the 11th Panzer Division and the reserve 327th Infantry Battalion) at the Ryukhovskoye-Chertanovo line, a grove west of Kuzminskoye; SS division "Empire"[107] - at the turn of Kolyshkino, Kukishevo; 252nd Infantry Division - at the line of Apukhtino, Palashkino. The presence of these

divisions in front of the army front was confirmed
prisoners and numerous documents.

By January 1, the front of the army remained in the position indicated on scheme.

The enemy's defense was active. In some areas, the Germans launched counterattacks in groups of submachine gunners, who were thrown back by us on the western bank of the Ruza River.

By this time, the combat strength of the army units was extremely small. According to the report of General Rokossovsky to the Military Council of the front, **"as a result of long intense battles, the 40th and 49th rifle brigades suffered heavy losses and had several dozen fighters in rifle battalions."**

The army, continuing to fulfill the task of breaking through the

enemy's defensive zone in order to encircle the Mozhaisk group of Germans, made persistent attempts to advance on the entire front. However, the small number of units, winter conditions and the stubbornness of the German defense did not allow the army troops to carry out an offensive in the western direction. The actions of the units during this period were mainly organized according to the method of

sequentially chewing through the defense by capturing individual enemy dugouts and firing points. The troops acted in small assault groups against firing points and centers of resistance and conducted methodical artillery fire on detected targets.

As on the front of other armies, the general course of the offensive during this period was as follows: for one or two days, units fought an offensive battle,

then (depending on the results of the battle), the troops either consolidated on the captured lines, or remained in the same position and prepared to resume the offensive. Starting from January 1, the

army troops conducted combat reconnaissance and firefights with the enemy at their former lines, preparing for the next offensive. The Germans continued to hold the Chertanovo, Ovinishche line and further along the western bank of the Ruza River to Palashkino. During this day, the enemy fired artillery, mortar and machine-gun fire at the battle formations of the army, pulling up infantry from the north-west to the areas of Stanovishche and Ostashevo.

On January 2, part of the army was already engaged in intense offensive battles on the entire front, meeting stubborn resistance from the Germans. The next day (January 3), especially stubborn battles took place in the sector of N. Kolyshkino, Ovinishte, Tepnevo (the right wing of the army). However, all attempts by the army to improve their situation were not successful.

In this regard, the front command faced the question of the need to regroup forces on the right wing in order to break through the enemy defenses in a narrower sector. The troops of the 16th Army apparently could not fulfill this task. In some of its divisions, the remaining regiments were consolidated into one consolidated battalion (354th rifle division). The 18th Rifle Division, operating with the 18th Rifle Brigade, also suffered heavy losses, which lost 172 people killed, 493 wounded and 7 frostbitten in the attacks that day. On January 5, the 354th Rifle Division with the 146th Tank, 40th and 49th Rifle Brigades had 377 bayonets and 13 tanks (of which 3 were medium and 10 were small). On January 4, the commander of the 16th Army received a directive from the Front's Military Council on preparations

for breaking through the enemy's defenses in the sector of the 20th Army. In accordance with this directive, some of the units assigned to reinforce the 20th Army were preparing to move to new concentration areas in the 20th Army zone. The following days of fighting on the front of the army significant changes

have not entered.

Thus, the offensive of the 1st, 20th and 16th armies in late December and early January was not successful, and the front of the right wing remained basically unchanged by the tenth of January. The left wing of the Kalinin Front was in a similar position -

the offensive of its left-flank units did not give positive results.

Chapter Four

The offensive of the central armies from the border of the Nara, Ruza, Moscow rivers and the development of operations

(December 25, 1941 - January 17, 1942)

The failures of the initial period of the offensive actions of the armies of the central sector of the Western Front in December were the basis for the restructuring of offensive methods in the spirit of the instructions given by the front commander. In a short time, a lot of work was done to improve the command and control of troops, the interaction of individual branches of troops in an offensive battle, the use of artillery in an offensive, and the assignment of tasks to tanks. In the 5th Army, this work coincided with the resupplying of units and putting them together for the upcoming new offensive.

The offensive carried out in the second half of December (albeit unsuccessful) provided valuable information about the enemy; it clarified the system of its defense and revealed the tactics of the actions of the enemy units.

The offensive of the 33rd and

43rd armies In connection with the successful offensive of the armies of the left wing of the Western Front and the advance of the 50th army and the group of General Belov in the Yukhnov direction, the situation for the operations of the 33rd and 43rd armies improved. The offensive of the left wing of the Western Front embraced the German troops opposing these armies; on the other hand, reconnaissance carried out by the enemy in battle revealed information about him that strengthened the hope for the success of new actions.

Therefore, the offensive of the 33rd and 43rd armies was continued, despite the failure of the first days. In the same direction, but slightly changing the grouping, the troops of the 33rd and 43rd armies on the night of December 24 again launched an offensive against the enemy's fortified zone. The Germans offered resistance, especially stubborn in areas of large settlements. But this time the enemy's stubbornness was broken by the even greater stubbornness of the attackers, who, skillfully bypassing the strongholds and blocking them with second echelons, moved forward step by step, overturning the Germans.

The pace of progress was small - at first 2-3 km per day. The offensive was more like gnawing through the enemy's defenses, but this gnawing gave into the hands of the advancing units the territory previously occupied by the enemy, and inflicted losses on him in manpower and technique.

The Germans felt the growing successes of the 33rd and 43rd armies and, not hoping to keep the line of the Nara River behind them, began to withdraw troops from it to the rear - to the Balabanovo, Borovsk, Maloyaroslavets area. On December 25, the shock groups of the armies were already on the line: the 33rd Army - Christmas, Dedeneva, Iklinskoye; 43rd Army - Aristovo, Alopovo.

At this time, the enemy still continued to hold in his hands some strongholds (Naro-Fominsk and a 75 km junction), which ended up in the rear of the advancing troops. The 75 km siding passed several times in fierce battles from hand to hand and was finally occupied by us. On December 26, our troops also captured Naro-Fominsk. Beyond Naro-Fominsk, the question of Balabanovo arose, from where the enemy already on December 25 began to withdraw his troops in the direction of Borovsk. The disclosure by our intelligence of the evacuation of Balabanovo increased the rate of advance of units of the 33rd and 43rd armies. Balabanovo opened the way to Borovsk and Maloyaroslavets, so mastering it acquired importance.

On December 28, units of the strike group of the 33rd Army (with the 93rd Infantry Division of the 43rd Army included in it) reached the Koryakovo, Dobrino, and Staro-Mikhailovskoe fronts. At this time, the 5th Airborne Corps of the 43rd Army with a swift blow overturned the German units opposing it and broke into Balabanovo on December 28. The 53rd Rifle Division, located to the left of it, went to the front of Orekhovka, Bol. Litashevo, and the 17th Rifle Division captured Mikhailovka and Boev.

Thus, the task set by the front commander was completed. Parts went to the line indicated by them. Opportunities for a further offensive on Borovsk and Maloyaroslavets were opened. Therefore, following the occupation of Balabanov, the efforts of the armies were directed towards capturing: the 33rd army - Borovsky, the 43rd army - Maloyaroslavets. On December 31, units of the 33rd Army, knocking down the enemy on their way, went to the front of Cheshkovo, Koryakovo, Inyutino, Ermolino. outlined

coverage of the German group, located in the Borovsk region. Fearing encirclement, the enemy hastily withdrew his troops from Borovsk further to the west.

At the same time, units of the 43rd Army, overcoming the resistance of the Germans, passed the line of their strongholds - Belkino, Pyatkino, Anisimovo, Spas-Zagorye, Gorodenki and came close to Maloyaroslavets, which, like Borovsk, was hastily evacuated

the Germans.

The battles on the outskirts of Maloyaroslavets were fought during January 1 and 2, 1942. At 2 pm on January 2, after a fierce battle, the 53rd Rifle Division with the 26th Tank Brigade occupied Maloyaroslavets. The 5th airborne corps at that time captured Ivanovsky, Piskovo, and the 17th rifle division went southwest of Maloyaroslavets. Before the 43rd Army, the possibility of an attack on

Medyn along the Warsaw highway.

On January 2, the 113th and 93rd Rifle Divisions of the 33rd Army entered the battle on the outskirts of Borovsk. Parts of the 93rd Rifle Division penetrated the city, where a street battle began, which lasted all night from 2 to 3 January and all day on January 3. The enemy, well-equipped with firepower, put up stubborn resistance, trying to save those units that were withdrawing from Borovsk at that time from defeat. On January 3, the 129th regiment of the 93rd rifle division occupied Sovyaki and Krasnoye, cutting off the enemy's escape route in the northwest

direction; on the night of January 4, the 201st Rifle Division captured Redkin, riding the road from Borovsk to Mityaev; the roads leading from Borovsk to the south were intercepted by our units earlier. Street fighting in Borovsk was already taking place in the center of the city. On the night of January 3-4, the remnants of the unfinished enemy units left Borovsk and in small groups, suffering losses, seeped through our units to the west. At 6 o'clock on January 4, the city was in our hands. The operation of

the 33rd Army developed further in a new direction - against a large enemy stronghold, the city of Vereya.

The offensive of the 5th army

The position of the troops of the 5th army and the enemy

Returning to the 5th Army, in the first days of January 1942 we find it in its former positions, along the eastern bank of the Ruza River and the northern bank of the Moscow River. At this line, units of the army entrenched themselves after their unsuccessful offensive in December. The 5th Army, replenished with manpower and equipment, was preparing for

a new offensive. The commander of the 5th Army knew that the enemy was intensively fortifying the western bank of the Ruza and southern Moscow; the city of Ruza is equipped with it

as a strong center of resistance. On the right, the 16th Army was advancing and on January 2, its left flank (the 9th Guards Rifle Division) reached the Danilkovo and Zakhryapino fronts. On the left, the 33rd Army fought for the city of Borovsk, its right flank slowly but consistently advanced in the direction of

Simbukhovo. It was not advisable to attack Ruza directly - such an offensive would be frontal in nature and, in connection with the defensive work carried out by the enemy along the western bank of the Ruza River, could lead to new victims. Since the right flank of the 33rd Army (222nd Rifle Division) by this time had moved forward somewhat and occupied the front of Maurino (claim.), Cheshkovo, the 5th Army had the opportunity to launch an offensive by advancing its left flank in the direction of Dorokhov, with the aim of coverage of those parts of the enemy that opposed the center of the 5th army. After occupying Dorokhov, the advancing units could move along the southern bank of the Moskva River and the western Ruza River, entering the rear of the enemy grouping located in the area of the city of Ruza.

The commander of the 5th Army singled out the 32nd Rifle Division as a strike group, setting it the task of breaking through the enemy's front in its zone and developing success in the direction of Yastrebovo. On the right wing of the army at that time, the 108th, 19th, 329th and 336th rifle divisions were to conduct demonstrative offensive operations. A breakthrough of

the enemy's defensive zone by the 32nd Infantry Division was planned on the Bol front. Semenyichi, Myakshevo, Lyubanovo; accordingly, the 82nd motorized rifle division was to lengthen its front to Bol. Semenyichi (suit.).

The balance of forces and assets on the breakthrough front of the 32nd Infantry Division was presented as follows:

Состав войск	Всего				На 1 км			
	людей	орудий	минометов	танков	людей	орудий	минометов	танков
5-я армия								
32-я стрелковая дивизия 36-й мотоциклетный полк	Около 5000	48	47	45	1000	Около 10	9,4	9
Противник								
508-й пехотный полк 292-й пехотной дивизии	Около 1300	20	50	—	260	4	10	—

The course of

hostilities On the night of January 6, the 32nd Rifle Division, after the change of its right-flank units by the 82nd Motorized Rifle Division, went on the offensive from the Bol. Semenychi, Lyubanovo. Cooperating with the 222nd Rifle Division, units of the 32nd Rifle Division overcame strong enemy fire resistance and slowly moved forward. At 13:30 on January 6, the division was counterattacked by fascist infantry, supported by heavy artillery and mortar fire. As a result of a counterattack by superior forces, parts of it were forced to return back and take their original position. The division lost 110 men killed and 185 wounded.

On January 7, the 32nd Rifle Division repeated the attack on the enemy's defensive zone. The latter, having a highly developed system of engineering structures, again resisted the advancing units, not only turning into counterattacks in separate directions, but also trying to seep into the depths of the combat formations of the advancing units by groups of submachine gunners.

Nevertheless, by 11 p.m. on January 7, the 32nd Infantry Division had captured the first line of enemy trenches; on the night of January 8, she consolidated on the captured line, preparing to continue her offensive on the morning of January 8. During January 8 and 9, the division's offensive continued to develop successfully. By the end of January 9, the 32nd Infantry Division, reinforced by the 36th Motorcycle Regiment, was already pursuing the enemy, who was hastily retreating in the direction of Maurino, Simbukhovo, from the line of Detdom (1 km southwest of B. Semenychi). The division achieved success:

the enemy's front was broken through, and its scattered units retreated in the western and south-western directions. The success achieved had to be developed by the transition of the left wing of the army to the offensive. On January 9, the commander of the 5th Army set this task for the troops:

"1. As a result of the successful breakthrough of the 32nd Rifle Division of the enemy's defensive zone, - we read in his order No. 01 of January 9, 1942, - the latter began a retreat on its left flank, in a general direction to the west.

2. The left-flank wing of the army goes into pursuit with the task of preventing the enemy from breaking away and seizing the Dorokhov knot on his shoulders.

In the same order, the chief of artillery of the army was tasked with:

"From 16:30 on January 9, 1942 and on the night of January 9 to January 10, organize artillery treatment of the Dorohovo area and the routes leading to the west."

Fulfilling the order of the army commander, the 82nd Motorized Rifle Division went on the offensive on the night of January 10 and by 7 o'clock on January 10 occupied Yakshino, Boldino, Vyglyadovka with its forward detachments. All that day she continued the offensive, interacting with the 32nd Infantry Division. The latter, pursuing the enemy, went to the front of Shubinka, Rodionchik by the end of the day.

On January 11, the 108th Rifle Division was transferred to the left flank of the army by means of vehicles, concentrating in the Kryukovo area (2 km northwest of Maurin). The 82nd motorized rifle division, disorganizing the German defenses with separate detachments, advanced on Dorohovo.

On January 12, the 50th Infantry Division went on the offensive, surrounding the enemy in Beloborodovo, the collective farm named after Kaganovich; The 82nd Motorized Rifle Division captured Trufanovka and Anashkin that day. The 108th Rifle Division, having gone on the offensive, went to the front of Yastrebovo, Novo-Arkhangelskoye. The 32nd Rifle Division with the 36th Motorcycle Regiment fought with the enemy in the Simbukhovo area. On January 13, the 50th Rifle Division captured

Dubrovka, the 82nd Motorized Rifle Division captured Kapanya, and the 108th Rifle Division went to the Mishinka and Stroganka fronts. Dorohovo

covered by our units.

On the night of January 14, squeezed from three sides by Soviet troops, the Germans left Dorohovo. On the shoulders of the enemy, the 82nd motorized rifle division broke into this fortified point. On the morning of January 14, Dorohovo was completely in our hands. After its occupation, the possibility of a strike in the direction of Mozhaisk and entry into the rear of the enemy grouping, which was defending Ruza, opened up. The divisions of the left wing of the army and the

center were aiming at Mozhaisk and, in the course of their movement, had to intercept the paths leading to it from Ruza. One 19th rifle division was left against Ruza, two other divisions (329th and 336th) moved to the left flank, increasing the power of the advancing wing of the army. On January 16, the troops of this wing reached the front of Tovarkovo, Lyskovo, Aleksandrovo,

Kozhukhovo. The 9th Guards Rifle Division of the 16th Army at that time advanced southwest from the Danilkovo and Zakhryapino lines. Ruza grouping of the enemy was covered by our units. Faced with the threat of a possible encirclement, the Germans left Ruza on the night of January 17 and began to withdraw in a westerly direction. At 11:30 on January 17, units of the 19th Rifle Division of the 5th Army occupied Ruza and reached the western bank of the Ruza River. The 5th Army was given a new task - the capture of Mozhaisk.

Conclusions In the actions of the armies of the central section of the Western Front in the second period of their offensive against the defending enemy, the following should be noted:

1. The failures of the first days did not break the will of the units of the 33rd and 43rd armies to attack. Taking into account the comments of the front commander and reorganizing their methods of work, they soon became able to achieve their goals with less difficulty than before. The success of the offensive by the left wing of the front (the 50th Army and the group of General Belov) opened up the possibility for them not only to improve their position, but also to achieve certain successes in the new offensive. In this respect, it is instructive to use the favorable situation that had developed at that time on another sector of the Western Front.

2. The

commander of the 5th Army did the right thing when he temporarily suspended the offensive of his units, understaffed them and put them in order. The offensive he organized on the extreme left flank of the army must be recognized as highly expedient. With such an offensive, the army broke through the enemy's front in its weak sector and, after breaking through with its left-flank divisions, went to the flank of the enemy's large center of resistance - Dorohovo. Continuing the offensive in the same direction would probably not have yielded a positive result and could have caused new heavy losses.

3. Successfully chosen by the commander of the 5th Army, the section of the breakthrough of the enemy's front opened up the possibility of making no less successful maneuvers of individual divisions in order to eliminate his strongholds and centers of resistance. As a result of the breakthrough made by the 32nd Infantry Division, Dorokhov was captured and abandoned by the enemy due to the threat of encirclement by our troops. Soon the same threat arose to the German garrison in Ruza, as a result of which they were forced to leave it.

We see the same thing in the 33rd and 43rd armies adjacent to the 5th Army. Both of them first aim at Balabanovo. As soon as Balabanovo was taken by our troops, new objects of their actions were opened for the armies: for the 33rd army - Borovsk and Vereya, for the 43rd - Maloyaroslavets and

Medyn. Skillfully directed actions exclude frontal strikes against the enemy, reduce losses during the offensive, and more likely lead to the goal - the destruction of enemy manpower and equipment and the liberation of the territory captured by the Germans.[108]

Chapter Five

The offensive of the armies of the left wing on Detchino, Kozelsk, Sukhinichi and the end of the battles for Kaluga and Belev

(December 25, 1941 - January 5-9, 1942)

The situation on the left wing by December 26, 1941

After December 25, the troops of the armies of the left wing of the Western Front were faced with the task of completing the offensive operations launched in the previous period. By December 26, the situation on the left wing of the front was as follows:

The 49th Army of General Zakharkin, with its right flank, fought northeast of Nedelnoye, and continued the fight for Nedelnoye with its center and left flank and advanced on the line of Detchino, Torbeevo. On this line, the enemy offered stubborn resistance. By December 26, the 137th, 263rd, 260th, 52nd and 131st German infantry divisions were operating in front of the front of the 49th Army. According to a number of data, it was known that the Germans in the Nedelnoye region had committed individual units of the 17th Infantry Division, which were trying to stop the advance

of our 238th Infantry Division. **The 50th army** of General Boldin, with the mobile group of General Popov, continued the street battle in Kaluga, and with the rest of the troops it covered the city from the north and southeast, while simultaneously advancing (on the extreme left flank) in the direction of Uteshevo. Units of the 31st, 131st, 137th, 296th Infantry and 20th Tank Divisions and subunits of other enemy units were still operating in front of

The 1st Guards Cavalry Corps of General Belov, having crossed the Oka on December 25 in the Kipet, Moshchena sector, with the main forces (1st Guards, 57th and 41st Cavalry Divisions) developed an offensive against Yukhnov, and two divisions (2nd guards and 75th cavalry divisions) moved to Kozelsk, with the task of taking it on December 27th. **The 10th army of**

General Golikov with right-flank divisions was on the western bank of the Oka and advanced on Kozelsk and to the south; the center and left flank of this army fought for Belev. Before the front

The 1st Guards Cavalry Corps and the 10th Army withdrew units of the 296th and 112th infantry, 10th and 29th motorized divisions of the enemy. The 216th Infantry Division operated in Kozelsk, and the Belev area was stubbornly held by units of the 296th and 112th Infantry Divisions.

Germans. Thus, the Nazi troops were driven off the Oka from Kaluga to Belev, but continued to stubbornly hold both cities, trying to stop our further offensive. Apparently, the desire of the Germans to stay at Nedelny and on the railway line in the Afonasovo, Detchino, Torbeevo section was subordinated to the same goal. The possession of this section of the railway made it possible for the enemy to secure Kaluga from the encirclement of the 49th Army from the north.

The course of hostilities on the front of the 49th Army until its units reached the Kaluga-Maloyaroslavets

railway (December 27, 1941 - January 9,

1942) Between December 27 and 31, the troops of the right flank of the 49th Army. Continuing the offensive, fought on the following lines:

The 415th Rifle Division encountered the strongest enemy resistance at the line of the Aloscha River (1 km west of the Troyanovo-Makarovo line), after which our offensive developed more successfully. Having taken possession of the village of Chernaya Gryaz together with units of the 60th Infantry Division, by the morning of December 30, the troops reached the Dubrovka, Durakovo, Pursovka line (5 km west of Chernaya Gryaz) and developed the offensive in a westerly direction. By order of the front command, the 415th Rifle Division was transferred to the 43rd Army on December 31 and operated on its left flank.

By this time, the 60th Rifle Division was withdrawn to the front reserve, to the area of Troyanovo, Makarovo, Maleev, Semkino, from where, according to the order of the front command No. 36 of January 3, 1942[109], together with the 26th Rifle Brigade, it was sent to Serpukhov for transfer to the reserve of the Supreme High Command.

By the same time, the 194th Rifle Division, having overcome the enemy's minefields and the resistance of its units covering the retreat, reached the Kanshino-Vasilchinovka line. Subsequently, the division continued its offensive in a westerly direction. 133rd

the rifle division, which had been advancing to the northwest through Chausovo, Tishkovo (6 km southwest of Vysokinichi), Filippovka until December 29, turned southwest with its entry into the Filippovka region and concentrated in the Verkhovye region by December 31. This was due to the need to strengthen the Detchinsk direction and turn the main forces of the army to Kondrovo.

The 26th rifle brigade by this time was fighting in the Chukhlovka area (2 km northeast of Nedelny), from where it was then transferred to the Serpukhov area, to the reserve of the High Command.

The 238th Rifle Division, together with the 19th Rifle Brigade, advanced on Nedelnoye. On the morning of December 30, units of the 238th Infantry Division and the 19th Infantry Brigade occupied Nedelnoye. Leaving part of the forces to clear the Nedelnoye area from the enemy, the 238th Infantry Division launched an offensive on Voznesenye (4 km south west of Nedelnoye). The 19th Infantry Brigade was advancing in the direction of Altunino. In the following days, the brigade developed an attack on Mikheevo (2 km north of Detchino), and the 238th Infantry Division, transferred to the left flank of the army, went out to Torbeevo with battles, where it met

strong German resistance. During this period, the actions of the 5th Guards Rifle Division were successful, two regiments of which, together with the 34th Rifle, 23rd and 18th Tank Brigades, reached the line of Ozhogino, Vorobyevo and to the south on December 30, where they fought off a number of enemy attacks. Parts of the 5th Guards Rifle Division had to fight at the indicated line in the conditions of detachment by the enemy of its rear and part of the artillery. With a strike by the 30th Rifle Brigade from the Potopkino area in the direction of Ushakovo, the German barrier was broken through, the carts, artillery and part of the headquarters of the 5th Guards Rifle Division, located in Verkhovye, were missed. The exit of the 5th Guards Rifle Division with attached units to the line of Ozhogino, Vorobyevo had a

positive effect on the outcome of the battles of our units in the Nedelnoye area. The 173rd Rifle Division, located in the area of Asorgino, Guryevo, Makarovka, where it retreated on December 28 as a result of an enemy counterattack, received the task of restoring the lost position and capturing Detchino. The division began to carry out this task immedi

In the period from January 1 to January 9, 1942, the combat events on the front of the 49th Army unfolded in the following sequence: the 194th Rifle Division, in cooperation with the 415th Rifle Division of the 43rd Army, overcoming enemy minefields and obstacles, moved forward and after a series of battles, she entered (January 4) on the line Afonasovo, Staroselye, having mastered these points. From January 5, the 194th Rifle Division was subordinated to the 43rd Army under the command of the front and operated on its left flank.

The 5th Guards Rifle Division, being aimed to the west, fought stubborn battles on the railway line in the Vorobyevo-Mikheevo sector (3 km north of Detchino) until January 9, moving forward with difficulty. The enemy offered stubborn resistance. In the Vorobyevo area, the Nazi units launched a "psychic" attack with forces up to the battalion, which cost them dearly. The guards accepted the attack and dealt a crushing blow to the Germans; the enemy battalion was destroyed; up to 200-300 corpses of soldiers and officers remained on the battlefield.

Until January 4, the 5th Guards Rifle Division, together with the 30th, 34th Rifle and 23rd Tank Brigades, fought on the railway line north of Detchino, and by January 9, it went to the Motyakino, Vasisovo, Mikheevo area, from where, according to a new According to the plan of the army command, it was supposed to act jointly with the 43rd Army in the direction of Kondrovo in order to destroy the enemy grouping concentrated there. The 18th Tank Brigade (which had previously operated jointly with the 5th Guards Rifle Division) was placed under the command of the commander of the 43rd Army and sent to Maloyaroslavets. The remaining troops of the army fought fierce battles at the turn of the railway - in the Detchino, Torbeevo section.

The enemy stubbornly held the occupied line, concentrated a large number of artillery and mortars on it, with the task of preventing our units from reaching the Linen Factory and Kondrov. The fighting was especially acute in the Detchino area, in the sector of the 133rd Infantry Division, where enemy strongholds repeatedly changed hands. In Taurovo (0.5 km south of Detchino), the division had to fight stubborn street battles. Only at noon on January 9, units of the 133rd Infantry Division broke the resistance of the Nazi troops and occupied Avdotino, Detchino, Bukrino,

Kurdyukovka. In the following days, the division's offensive developed according to the new army plan in a westerly direction. By this time, the 173rd Rifle Division, overcoming enemy resistance, had captured the line of Lisenki, Bogrovo, Bykovo (all points northeast of Torbeevo, 2-4 km) and was advancing on Durovka.

No less intense battles unfolded during this period in the sector of the 238th Infantry Division, especially with enemy units defending the Torbeevo, Nizh. Gorki (2 km west of Torbeevo), which they turned into a strong fortified knot. According to the army headquarters, up to 1,500–2,000 infantry with artillery and mortars were concentrated in the Torbeevo area. By holding this area, the enemy, apparently, sought to eliminate the threat of flank coverage by our units of the Linen Factory from the southeast. Only by the morning of January 11, by covering Torbeevo from the north, the 238th Infantry Division was able to overcome enemy resistance here and forced him to withdraw. In the

subsequent period, the 49th Army develops an offensive on Kondrovo, Linen Plant, fulfilling the directive of the front of January 9 on defeat in cooperation with the 43rd and 50th armies and the 1st guards cavalry corps of the enemy's Medyn-Kondrovo-Yukhnov grouping.

The main operational result of the considered actions of the 49th Army from the point of view of the front-line operation was that the resistance of the Germans was broken in the Nedelnoye, Bashmakovka sector and the Maloyaroslavets, Detchino, Kaluga railway. Our units went to the Kondrovo area, the Linen Factory, from where it was possible to intercept the Warsaw highway.

Operational and tactical conclusions on the offensive of the 49th Army As a result of the offensive of the 49th Army, three enemy defense centers were liquidated from December 19 to January 9: in the Vysokinichi region, in the Nedelnoye, Bashmakovka regions and on the Maloyaroslavets-Kaluga railway line (on the site Detchino, Torbeevo). The army troops covered from 50 to 60 km, which averaged from 2.5 to 3 km per day. Consideration should be given to the wooded nature of the area, the poor condition of the roads due to drifts, and the persistent

the resistance of the enemy, who used fortified points and minefields.

During the offensive of the 49th Army after December 20, the issue of operational cooperation with the 50th Army in the process of initiating and developing battles for Kaluga became very relevant. This operational interaction, as we said above, was carried out by the assignment of tasks by the command of the 49th Army to the left-flank divisions for a deep strike in the general direction of Detchino.

It should be noted that there were cases of frontal attacks on enemy strongholds, which led to a loss of time and cost heavy casualties. On the basis of repeated instructions from the Military Council of the front, the army command in its orders noted this shortcoming, demanding that frontal attacks be avoided and act by enveloping and bypassing enemy fortifications. The capture of the villages in a similar way Vysokinichi, Torbeevo and other strongholds once again confirmed the expediency and effectiveness of these tactics. A significant shortcoming should include cases of loss of communication between the headquarters of the 49th army and some formations (for example, with the 173rd rifle division on December 27-28 during its battles in the area of Bol. Luga, Pnevno-

Rakhmanovo, Asorgino), which deprived the command of the army ability to manage them effectively.

Of great importance were the actions of the ski units as mobile detachments for bypassing the strongholds of the Nazi troops and attacking their rear lines, communications and headquarters. These detachments gave the greatest effect under the condition of the presence of special group and individual training of fighters and the inclusion in their composition of submachine gunners, anti-tank rifles and heavy machine guns mounted on skis. The experience of giving skiers a sapper, with explosives and light mortars justified itself. Such detachments could be entrusted with the tasks of detour maneuver on the flanks of the enemy occupying a defensive line, and the tasks of carrying out deep reconnaissance. They could also be used to destroy enemy reserves, destroy rear lines, fuel depots, to hold individual sectors, points and lines that are tactically important until our units approach.

The ski detachments acquired somewhat more importance in the subsequent period.

The actions of tank troops (just like in other armies of the left wing of the front) took place in direct interaction with rifle formations by subordinating tank units to combined arms commanders. This was due to the small number of tanks and winter conditions. At the same time, it is instructive to include tank subunits in mobile detachments for enveloping the enemy and throwing them behind enemy lines. Indicative in this regard are the actions of the regiment of the 133rd rifle division with the 23rd tank brigade in the Iskanskoye area (7 km north of Tarusa), which took place on December 17, and the rifle battalion of the same division with 11 tanks near Vysokinichi, at the crossings across the Protva River - December 18th.

Development and completion of the battles of the 50th Army for Kaluga and access to Yukhnov direction

(December 26, 1941 - January 5, 1942: second stage Kaluga operation)

The Course of Combat Operations on the Front of the 50th

Army before the Occupation of Kaluga Combat events on the front of General Boldin's 50th Army after December 25 unfolded as follows.

The troops of the mobile group of General Popov continued to fight stubborn street battles in Kaluga - in the southern, central and southeastern parts of the city. The Germans still held the northern and western parts of the city, defending themselves on the barricades and repeatedly launching counterattacks with the support of artillery and tanks. In the battle on the afternoon of December 25, our troops captured 6 guns and 2 tanks. With the same tension, the battles of the mobile group proceeded during December 26. They were especially fierce in the north-eastern part of the city and in the area of railway stations, which the enemy tried

On the morning of December 26, the right-flank 340th Rifle Division went on the offensive from the Boldasovka, Maryino line (4 km south of Boldasovka) in the direction of Kaluga. The Kaluga enemy grouping (parts of the 31st and 131st Infantry Divisions and other formations), occupying the area of forests and settlements east of Kaluga, offered us stubborn resistance. During the battle on the front of the 340th Infantry Division, two groups were formed: left-flank

the regiment, interacting with the right-flank units of the 290th Infantry Division, by the end of December 27, captured Zhdamirovo (1 km east of Turynino) and attacked Turynino. The other two regiments, overcoming the resistance of the Germans, by the morning of December 29 reached the front of the Stopkino, Voskresenskoye junction, height 216.1 (3 km southeast of Voskresenskoye), bypassing Kaluga from the

northeast. The command of the front, taking into account the protracted battles for Kaluga, in the directive of the 50th Army of December 27, demanded that the clearing of the city from the enemy be accelerated in order to be able, in cooperation with the 49th Army, to develop an offensive in the direction of Tikhonov Pustyn, Linen Factory with the task of taking them no later December

In accordance with the instructions of the front, the army command accelerated the advance of the divisions of the left flank, setting before them the task of deep coverage of Kaluga from the west. By that time, the central divisions covered the city from the southeast and southwest. The 290th Rifle Division fought its way to Turynino, interacting with the left flank regiment of the 340th Rifle Division. Turynino was turned by the enemy into a strong stronghold, the capture of which by a frontal attack was difficult. Therefore, the division commander, at the direction of the army command, left one regiment to fight for Turynino in cooperation with the regiment of the 340th rifle division. The other two regiments were concentrated in the forest south of Mal. Sloboda with the task of bypassing Turynino from the northeast and, together with the main forces of the 340th Infantry Division, attacking Kaluga from the north. The 258th Rifle Division, having the task

of attacking Kaluga from the southwest, fought in the area of Annenki, Zhelybino, and Romodanovo from the morning of December 26. The enemy stubbornly strove to hold these points. With the support of tanks and artillery, the Germans repeatedly launched counterattacks. The battle in the area of the indicated points continued until December 29. By the morning of December 29, the 268th Rifle Division concentrated its main forces in the Kvan, Verkhovaya area (1 km southwest of Kvan) to attack Kaluga from the southwest; part of the forces of the division fought for Zhelybino and the Sanatorium (1 km west of Kaluga).

On the morning of December 30, the battles directly for Kaluga flared up with renewed vigor and entered a decisive phase. On the night of December 30, parts of the mobile group launched a decisive offensive and by dawn on December 30 cleared the northwestern and northern parts of the enemy

cities and approaches to the bridge across the Oka from the north. After a fierce battle, the Nazi troops were driven out of Kaluga by 10 o'clock on December 30 and began to retreat in the northwestern and western directions. In

the battles for Kaluga, over 7,000 enemy soldiers and officers were destroyed and numerous trophies were taken. The troops of the right flank and the center of the army continued their offensive, pursuing the retreating Germans.

Undoubtedly, the offensive of the divisions of the left flank of the army, which proceeded as follows, influenced the favorable outcome of the battles for Kaluga. The 413th Rifle Division, whose left flank was firmly covered by the actions of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, after occupying Likhvin, advanced in a northwestern direction and by December 26 was on the Vorobyovka, Pokrovskoye line and to the south. Having set out from the indicated line on the same day, by December 30, the division reached the front of Kromeno, Rassudovo, from where it developed its attack in a northern direction.

Initially operating to the right of the 413th Rifle Division, the 217th Rifle Division from the front of Zhelekhovo, Selkovo, Sinyatino (on which it was located on December 26), advancing in the direction of Babynino, on December 30 approached the Maloyaroslavets-Sukhinichi railway in the Vysokoye-Babynino section and aimed strike of their main forces in the direction of Uteshevo. The 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, having occupied Kozelsk with two divisions on December 28, threw out two other divisions (1st Guards and 57th Cavalry) in a northwestern direction and by the end of December 28 they occupied the area of Ilyino, Kalintevo, Mezentshevo, thereby cutting off retreat route of the Kaluga enemy grouping in a southwestern direction. An indirect

operational impact on the outcome of the battles for Kaluga was exerted by the strike of the left-flank divisions of the 49th Army in the direction of Detchino and Torbeevo. The overhang of the troops of the 49th Army over Kaluga from the north accordingly deprived the Kaluga group of Germans of support from the Detchino, Torbeevo region and created

a threat of envelopment from the north. Thus, during the decisive period of the Kaluga operation, the battles on the front of the 50th Army mainly took p

and southwestern, operationally subordinated to one goal - to defeat the enemy and his relentless pursuit.

In the battles in the northern sector, the following are of considerable interest: 1) the flank maneuver of the 290th Infantry Division to Mal. Sloboda for a joint attack with the 340th Infantry Division on Kaluga from the north; 2) fighting in the city itself of the mobile group with a high morale and combat state of the personnel of its units, despite the extremely difficult conditions; 3) an attack by the 258th Infantry Division from the southwest as one of the components of the general plan to capture Kaluga. In the

southwestern sector, it is instructive to maneuver the 217th and 413th rifle divisions to the northwest with the aim of intercepting the enemy's escape routes in the southwest direction. This maneuver had a positive impact on the outcome of the battles for Kaluga. No less instructive is the exit of two divisions of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps to the area of Ilyino, Mezentsievo, Kalintevo, which also contributed to the favorable outcome of the battles for Kaluga. At the same time, it should be added that the offensive of the units of the 50th Army took place in conditions of unfavorable meteorological conditions: snowfall (December 26-27), frost, sometimes reaching 30 ° (for example, December 30).

The development of the offensive of the 50th Army after the occupation of Kaluga until reaching the Yukhnov direction

western and northwestern directions.

According to the directive of the front of December 30, the army of General Boldin had the task of advancing in a north-western direction, to go to the rear of the enemy's Kondrov grouping and further develop a strike in the direction of Myatlevo. At least one rifle division was to be sent to Medyn. The rest of the army was ordered to continue pursuing the enemy's defeated Kaluga grouping, acting in the direction of Yukhnov.

In development of the directive of the front, the command of the 50th Army assigned the following

tasks to the troops: The right-flank ~~290th~~ and [258th\[110\]](#) rifle divisions and the 32nd

advance on the Pyatovskaya, Karavay front (18 km northwest of Kaluga).
Upon

the exit of both divisions to the indicated front, the 290th rifle division was to be thrown in the direction of the Linen Factory with the task of reaching the flank and rear of the enemy grouping operating there. The 340th Rifle Division, previously located on the extreme right flank of the 50th Army, surrendered its area to the 290th Rifle Division and was transferred to the left flank of the army for operations in the Yukhnov direction. The 154th Rifle Division,

which had previously been part of the mobile group of General Popov, was also withdrawn from Kaluga to the left flank of the 50th Army. In the period from

January 1 to January 6, the right flank of the troops of the 50th Army, carrying out the assigned task, fought stubborn battles with the Nazi units for the capture of the Tikhonova Pustyn station. The left flank of the army (217th and 413th rifle divisions) continued to pursue the Germans in the direction of Uteshevo.

During January 6, units of the 50th Army, having met strong enemy defenses, fought at the front: the 290th and 258th rifle divisions - the forest east of Argunovo, (exclusively) Pochinki (4 km south of Argunovo), Domozhirovo, Gorenskoye (claim.), Krutitsy (claim.), Annenki (claim.). The 413th Rifle Division, having captured Zheleztsovo, advanced on Osenevo and Nedetovo. In the area of the points mentioned above, the division was subjected to enemy pressure from the north, where units of the 137th and 52nd German infantry divisions were operating.

The 217th Rifle Division, defending with one regiment on the Troskino-Eremino line, covered the army strike group (340th, 154th Rifle and 112th Tank Divisions), which was given the task of advancing on Yukhnov. Transferred from the right flank of the army, the 340th Rifle Division fought for Ugarovka, Kudinovo. By the same time, the 154th rifle and 112th tank divisions, meeting strong enemy resistance, sought to capture Shchelkanovo and Zubovo.

Attaching great importance to the area of the Linen Factory, Kondrovo and the Medynsko-Myatlev-Yukhnovsky area, the German command organized a strong defense in these areas. According to the intelligence of the front, by January 7, 1942, in the Argunovo, Bol. Kamenka (3 km southeast of Tikhonova Pustyn station), Krutitsy

acted, putting up stubborn resistance to our troops, parts of the 131st Infantry Division of the enemy. The area of Annenki, Pletnevka, Palaces was defended by units of the 31st Infantry Division. According to the same data, the Kozhukhovo area (2 km west of Osenev), Nedetovo, Golovino (3 km north of Troskino), Vshivka were held by units of the 137th Infantry Division, and the 36th Motorized division and other units.

In a directive dated January 1, the front command drew the attention of the commander of the 50th Army to the need to personally organize a battle in the directions of the main attack and carry out reconnaissance jointly with the commanders of the formations of the main direction. Given the importance of interaction between artillery and infantry, especially during the offensive, the front command ordered the commanders of rifle battalions and supporting artillery battalions to be located at the same command post; in addition, the removal of command posts from the front line during an offensive was regulated: army headquarters no further than 10-12 km, and division and brigade headquarters -

3-4 km. Winter conditions and the need for the fastest pursuit of the enemy required the subordination of all ski units directly to the army commander in order to more effectively ***"use them as mobile groups with the tasks of developing a breakthrough and strikes on the flanks and rear of the enemy, as well as for night raids on his rear and headquarters ... "*** (from the order of the front No. 0138 / op, given in the first days of January 1942).

In the period following January 6, the troops of the 50th Army, fulfilling their assigned tasks, fought stubborn battles with the Nazi troops in the Yukhnov direction.

General conclusion and conclusions on the Kaluga

operation With the release of the 50th, 10th armies and the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps on the Oka in the Kaluga, Likhvin, Belev sector (the actions of the 10th Army and the 1st Guards Corps are described in detail in the description Belevsko-Kozelskaya operation) and the mastery of this line, the fascist German troops lost an important line, which they stubbornly strove to hold. Thus, the Nazi army was doomed to a further retreat.

The Kaluga operation of the 50th Army lasted about 19 days and deployed in a zone limited from the north by the border of the Oka River (until the mobile group reached the southern approaches to Kaluga) and from the south by the border along the line Krapivna, Odoevo, Likhvin and further northwest to Uteshevo with a total depth of 90 to 130 km with an offensive front width of

40 to 50 km. The average rate of advance of the troops of the 50th Army (with stubborn resistance from the enemy in a number of sectors, in winter conditions and bad roads) was about 6 km per day. However, this pace was not the same in different sectors of the army front. For example, during the first three and a half days before reaching Kaluga, the mobile group of General Popov traveled on average about 23 km per day, having successfully coped with the task assigned to it. Such a pace must be recognized as high, not only on the scale of the armies of the left wing, but on

the whole front. When considering the Kaluga operation of the 50th Army, it is necessary to note the following: 1.

This operation was not preceded by a special preparatory period. It grew directly from the Tula offensive operation and deployed in the western and northwestern directions. With the withdrawal of the troops of the 50th Army to the north-west of Kaluga, the offensive also did not end, but developed further, with the aim of fulfilling the further tasks of the front-line operation. The material and technical

support of the army, which was carried out during the Tula operation, continued uninterrupted in the very course of the offensive of our troops. The rear basically coped with its task. However, winter conditions made themselves felt. Due to drifts, a number of units experienced difficulties with the delivery.

2. The creation of an operational mobile group, which played a decisive role in the capture of Kaluga, fully justified itself. The organization of this group according to the situation was quite consistent with the place and time, and surprise was achieved by the swiftness of its rush to Kaluga. Only the strong defense of Kaluga, prepared in advance, prevented the mobile group from taking it on the move. The experience of creating such groups is instructive, and the maneuverable nature of its actions speaks of high combat training.

fighters and commanders and can serve as an example worthy of emulation.

3. During the operation, the maneuver of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps to capture Odoev played a major role in terms of interaction, and the quick exit of its 1st Guards and 57th Cavalry Divisions to the Kaluga-Sukhinich tract ensured the further deployment of the offensive of the 50th Army in a northwest direction. Indirect operational influence and assistance was exerted by a strike by the left-flank divisions of the 49th Army, aimed by the army commander in the direction of Detchino, Torbeevo and depriving the Kaluga enemy grouping of support from this direction.

4. During the battles for Kaluga, the method of bypassing and enveloping enemy strongholds was widely used, making it impossible for him to keep them behind him. This method followed from the instructions of the front command and was one of the most effective methods in the fight against the defensive tactics of the enemy.

5. Tank formations attached to the army (division and brigades), due to the small number of tanks, could not play an independent role; the main attention in their use was paid to direct interaction with the infantry (for example, the 112th tank division with the 164th rifle division). 6. With the onset of winter, the question of the combat use of

ski units as mobile detachments with the tasks of developing a breakthrough, striking at the flanks, joints and headquarters of the enemy, acquired actual importance. The nature of the combat use of ski units in the troops of General Boldin was basically the same as in the 49th Army. 7. In matters of control, it is necessary to once again note the repeated

instructions of the headquarters and the Military Council of the front, which categorically demanded the approach of the command and headquarters of the armies, divisions and brigades to the troops, as well as their direct leadership of the combined arms combat of subordinate units and formations.

Combat operations on the front of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps and the 10th Army from December 25, 1941 to January 8, 1942 (the second stage of the Belevsko-Kozelsk operation)

The course of *the battles for Belev and Kozelsk*

plan:

- The right-flank 1st Guards and 57th Cavalry Divisions, according to the directive of the front - to act in the direction of Yukhnov in order to reach the rear of the Yukhnovo-Kondrovskaya group of Germans - by the end of December 28, they reached the Ilyino, Kalintevo, Mezentsievo area, where they concentrated. The 41st Cavalry Division made a night march from the Kamenka area (12 km northeast of Kozelsk) with the task of concentrating in the Khvalovo, Vislovo, Spas area by the morning of December 29, from where it was to operate jointly with the 1st Guards and 57th Cavalry divisions in the Yukhnov direction.
- The left-flank 75th and 2nd Guards Cavalry Divisions, passing through the forest to the east of Kozelsk, entered into battle with the German fascist units defending the city at the turn of the Zhizdra River. Both cavalry divisions had the task of capturing Kozelsk by the end of December **27th**. After the occupation of Kozelsk, the 2nd Guards and 75th Cavalry Divisions were to operate in the same direction as the divisions on the right flank of the cavalry corps. The pace of the corps' offensive after it reached the western bank of the Oka increased significantly.

The headquarters of the 1st Guards Corps from Likhvin (where it was located on December 28) moved to Matyukovo (7 km southeast of Babynino station). Attached to the cavalry corps, the 9th tank brigade, being delayed by snow drifts, remained in Odoevo.

The 322nd and 328th rifle divisions attached to the cavalry corps, according to the headquarters of the 10th army, were near Belev on the afternoon of December 27: the 322nd rifle division attacked the eastern approaches to the city, and the 328th rifle division, moving north Beleva, part of the forces fought with the Germans, who covered the northern approaches to the city. The

front command, taking into account the advanced position of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps and the fact that both rifle divisions were involved in the battle for Belev, by a directive of December 29, again reassigned the 322nd and 328th rifle divisions to the commander of the 10th Army, since their further stay in the cavalry

corps would hamper the actions of the latter and complicate the issue of management. During this period of time, there were frequent cases of a break in communication between the headquarters of the 10th Army and the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, which the headquarters of the front and the operational department of the General Staff repeatedly pointed out to the

headquarters of the 10th Army. The left-flank units of the 330th Rifle Division also took part in the battle for Belev, which operated along the highway leading from Belev to the north, parallel to the Oka River along its western bank.

The reconnaissance of the headquarters of the 330th Rifle Division during this period established the presence in Belev of units of the 167th and 112th infantry divisions of the enemy with heavy artillery and tanks.

By order of the front command, the commander of the 10th Army, General Golikov, took over the leadership of the hostilities to capture Belev, who went to the Belev area with the task force of the army headquarters. By December 28, the command post was deployed in Zhivotovo. On the afternoon of December 28, the 239th and 324th Rifle

Divisions of the 10th Army advanced to the Kudrino-Davydovo line and continued to advance in a westerly direction. The 330th Rifle Division fought a stubborn battle with enemy units covering Belev from the north in the area of Besedino, Beregovaya; The last item changed hands twice. By this time, the 323rd Rifle Division was passing Snykhovo with its advanced units, moving in a westerly direction. The 325th and 326th rifle divisions were still in the second echelon of the army, in the area of Boloto, Gorodnya, Kalinovka.

The 2nd Guards and 75th Cavalry Divisions during the day of December 27 fought for Kozelsk, but could not capture it. The German 296th and 216th infantry divisions defending the city offered stubborn resistance. Fascist aviation, with its group and single raids on our cavalry, made it difficult to move forward. Our troops suffered significant losses. The 9th tank brigade, being in the Odoevo area, was unable to provide support to the cavalry units.

Only on the morning of December 28, the 2nd Guards and 75th Cavalry Divisions, covering Kozelsk from the northwest and south, pinning down the enemy from the east, broke into the city and, after a short street battle, knocked out

from there the fascist German units. Large trophies were captured in Kozelsk. During

the afternoon of December 28, the 2nd Guards and 75th Cavalry Divisions with all their might pursued the retreating units of the enemy's 216th and 296th Infantry Divisions in the western and northwestern directions.

By December 29, units of the 10th Army, carrying out the assigned tasks of attacking in the direction of Kozelsk, Sukhinichi and to the west, went out: the 239th and 324th rifle divisions went to the Kozelsk area, where they contacted units of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps. The 323rd Rifle Division, moving into the same area, was in Kireevsky by the morning of December 29 (by rail, 15–16 km southeast of Kozelsk). The 328th Rifle Division, bypassing enemy strongholds north of Belev, moved along the route Pashkovo, Karacheevo (both points 6-10 km east of Kireevskoye) with the task of reaching the flank and rear of the Belevskaya enemy grouping from the Ishutino, Maslovo junction area. The 326th Rifle Division was heading along the route Moschen, Skrylyevo, Slagovishchi and was supposed to reach the Lavrovskoye, Tolstoy area on December 30 (10 km southwest of Kozelsky). At dawn on December 29, the 325th Rifle Division set out from the Gorodnya, Kalinovka area, where it was in the second echelon of the army, with the task of reaching the Kozelsk area. The 322nd and 330th rifle divisions continued to fight for Belev, advancing: the 330th rifle division from the north - from the line of Maslovo, Redovo, Beregovaya, and the 322nd rifle division - from the east. Enveloping the enemy from several directions, both divisions pressed him, forcing him to retreat to Belev with battles and

heavy losses. The stubborn battle for the city continued with great tension all day on December 30th. The 328th Rifle Division also took part in it, which part of the forces, together with the 330th Rifle Division, covered Belev from the north and northwest. By 1 pm on December 31, the outcome of the battle was decided in our favor, and the troops of the 10th Army captured the city, capturing large trophies. The defeated enemy began to retreat in the western and southwestern directions.

On the afternoon of December 31, the 322nd Rifle Division continued to clear Belev of small groups of Germans remaining there, and

The 328th and 330th rifle divisions were sent to develop the offensive in the western and northwestern directions.

The development of the offensive of the 10th Army and the 1st Guards cavalry corps after the occupation of Kozelsk and Belev

After the occupation of Kozelsk, the 2nd Guards and 75th Cavalry Divisions, pursuing the retreating enemy, reached the front by the end of the day on December 29: the 75th Cavalry Division - Berdy, Pronino, and the 2nd Guards Cavalry Division - Plyuskovo, Kashcheva.

On the night of December 30, both cavalry divisions reached the Privalovo, Ryazantsevo, Meshchovsk region (which was occupied by the enemy), where they concentrated. According to order No. 132 issued by General Belov on December 29, the 2nd Guards and 75th Cavalry Divisions left the indicated area at nightfall on December 30 and headed along the Beklemishevo, Foshnya, Mochalovo route to take their starting position in the Mochalovo, Gorokhovka area, Sulikhovo for an offensive in the direction of Shuklev, Maryina. The divisions were supposed to cut off the enemy's retreat from Yukhnov to the southwest.

By the morning of December 31, the 1st Guards, 57th and 41st Cavalry Divisions reached the front of Poroslitsy, Kurbatovo, Zubovo, Tarasov. They had the task of capturing Yukhnov and further developing an attack on Vyazma, sending part of their forces to Medyn in order to cut off the enemy's escape route.

The combat operations of the troops of the group of General Belov after December 31 took place in the following sequence: the 41st Cavalry Division, located on the right flank of the group with the task of breaking through in the Yukhnov direction, fought on the front of Solopikhino, Zubovo from January 1 to 4. By the same time, the 57th and 1st Guards Cavalry Divisions, which received the same task as the 41st Cavalry Division, fought through the line Zhiteevka, Sukholom, Zheremeslo (2 km west of Sukholom), Kurkino. The left-flank 75th and 2nd Guards Cavalry Divisions advanced in the direction of Davydovo with the aim of reaching the area west of Yukhnov. By January 4, both divisions were stopped by the enemy on the front of Tibeki, Davydovo, Foshnya, Petushki (2 km southeast of Foshnya), a firefight ensued.

On January 6, the Germans, with up to three infantry regiments, supported by tanks and aircraft, launched a counterattack from the Ozero, Sulikhovo, Zhivulki front and forced parts of the group's left flank to withdraw to the Davydovo, Foshnya, Beklemishevo line. A fierce battle ensued at this point. Parts of the 41st, 57th and 1st Guards Cavalry Divisions fought hard battles on the former front. The troops of the cavalry group experienced a lack of ammunition. In this regard, General Belov on January 7 decided to go on the defensive. On January 8, the cavalry group of General Belov was turned to Mosalsk and carried out a new task for the front. —

[111] The troops of the right flank of the 10th Army, after they reached the Kozelsk area, were: by January 1, the 239th Infantry Division was approaching the line, Khoten, Klesovo, aiming to bypass Sukhinichi from the north. On December 29, the 324th Rifle Division went to the front of the station Muzalevka, Mekhovoe, with the task of attacking Sukhinichi from the southeast. On January 2, the 326th Rifle Division approached the line of Muzalevka, Berezovka, Slobodka with fighting, acting in a westerly direction. On December 30, the 323rd Rifle Division was in the Volkonskoye area, preparing to advance in a westerly direction, bypassing Sukhinichi from the south. The 325th Rifle Division was concentrated in Kozelsk. By January 1, the 328th and 330th rifle divisions were withdrawn to the Kozelsk area as part of the main army grouping. The 322nd Rifle Division was left in Belev as its garrison with the task of securing the left flank

of the army. From January 1 to January 5, the 10th Army attacked Meshchovsk and Serpeisk with its right-flank units, and the center (334th and 239th rifle divisions) fought for Sukhinichi. An attempt to take Sukhinichi with a frontal attack ended unsuccessfully. The army command decided, without stopping the offensive, to block Sukhinichi. The remaining divisions in the indicated period of time were completing their advance from the Belev and Kozelsk regions to the Lyudinovo-Kirov direction.

From that time on, a new stage in the hostilities of the armies of the left wing began, during which they fought for access to the Varshavskoe highway and the Vyazma-Bryansk railroad.

Operational and tactical conclusions on Belevsko-Kozelskaya operations

The common goal of the Belevsko-Kozelsk operation of the 10th Army and the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps was the relentless pursuit of the defeated enemy with the task of preventing him from gaining a foothold on intermediate lines. Along the way, it was necessary to seize the junctions of the unpaved and railway roads Kozelsk and Sukhinichi and, in the shortest possible time, reach the Vyazma-Bryansk road and intercept the Varshavskoe highway at Yukhnov, depriving the Nazi troops of this most important highway.

Despite a number of difficulties that our troops had to overcome, the tasks assigned by the front command to the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps and the 10th Army were mainly completed.

From December 20 to January 5, that is, in 17 days of the operation, the 10th Army and the Cavalry Corps traveled about 130–140 km, starting their march maneuver from the line of the Plav River. On average, this amounted to about 8 km per day. In the conditions of winter, stubborn resistance of the enemy and the unsatisfactory state of the rear, this rate of advance should be recognized as sufficiently high.

The rate of advance of the 10th Army could have been even higher provided that the 61st Army of the Bryansk Front, adjacent to the left, did not lag behind and thus did not keep the left flank of the 10th Army open. This circumstance contributed to the creation by the enemy of the Belevsky bridgehead and stubbornly holding it behind him. At that moment, when the divisions of the left flank of the 10th Army were fighting for Belev, by December 28, units of the 61st Army were only reaching the line south

of Belev. The 1st Guards Cavalry Corps with its right-flank divisions (1st Guards and 57th Cavalry) from December 20 to 31 traveled about 150 km, or about 13-15 km per day, and the rate of advance of these divisions from the line of the Oka River to the area Ilyino, Kalintevo, Mezentssevo averaged up to 20 km per day. Such a pace of the offensive march of the cavalry corps in winter conditions and the separation of the right-flank divisions from the rear should also be considered good.

One of the characteristic features of the use of cavalry in this operation, as in the Tula operation that preceded it, was the reinforcement of cavalry by rifle divisions, with the latter subordinating to the commander of the cavalry corps. Here, to a certain extent

the experience of the civil war was repeated, when rifle divisions were also attached to the 1st Cavalry Army (for example, in the Voronezh-Kastorno operation of 1919). Such measures were not accidental, each time they were dictated by the conditions of a particular situation and justified themselves in the course of hostilities. In such cases, the infantry reinforced the cavalry, and the latter, up to a certain point, turned into infantry. Under these conditions, the horse served as a means of quick maneuvering when cavalry units approached the object of attack. The number of rifle divisions attached to the cavalry corps was variable and depending on the situation

changed.

If it was necessary to quickly throw the cavalry far ahead (as was the case, for example, after the cavalry corps reached the western bank of the Oka), rifle divisions were temporarily excluded from the subordination of cavalry commanders. The front command pursued the same goal, attaching tank units to the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps. Being reinforced by infantry and tank units, our cavalry could deploy major combat operations on the flanks and behind enemy lines. There were especially many such examples in subsequent operations.

The cavalry units made extensive use of night operations. All movements, and in some cases, battles for settlements were carried out under the cover of darkness. This saved our cavalry from attacks by enemy aircraft and allowed it, suddenly and quickly appearing in front of the Germans, to inflict serious defeats on them. All preparations for the campaign and the battle took place before dark. In the conditions when marches and battles with the enemy had to be carried out during the day, air defense issues acquired topical importance. However, it should be noted that with relatively fast movements of cavalry units, air defense often failed to cope with the tasks assigned to it, and its means were limited. Thus, during the movement of the cavalry group of General Belov to the Yukhnov area, its units during daytime marches and stops were subjected to strong enemy aircraft. One of the serious shortcomings in the conduct of the operation under consideration, made by both the headquarters of the 10th Army and the headquarters

1st Guards Cavalry Corps, there were a number of cases of loss of communication between the headquarters of the army and the corps with subordinate troops, as well as among themselves. This also applied to the connection between the army headquarters and the front headquarters. Sometimes the front headquarters did not have data from the army on the position of the troops. At the same time, the army headquarters did not know the actual situation on the front of the units subordinate to it.

Such a situation was, for example, on the night of December 29 and on the days of December 29 and 30. To a large extent, this lack of command and control was due to the lack of sufficient communications equipment in the 1st Cavalry Corps and the 10th Army. From the report of General Belov to the commander of the front, General Zhukov, dated December 31, it can be seen that he had only one 5-AK radio station on a sledge. The remaining radio stations either fell behind or were damaged by enemy aircraft. Blizzards and snowfall made it difficult to communicate by plane. In addition, the increased activity of German aviation affected. A similar situation existed in the 10th Army, whose divisions in the last period of the operation had to fight on a broad front. One of

the main types of command and control was the personal communication of the chiefs among themselves and the approach of command posts directly to the front line.

After January 5, 1942, the armies of the left wing of the front, without stopping the offensive, began a new period of hostilities. For the 49th Army, it began on January 9, when its troops received the task of capturing the defensive line of the Germans Kondrovo, the Linen Factory and defeating (in cooperation with the 43rd and 50th armies) the Kondrovo Myatlev-Yukhnov grouping of the enemy. The 50th Army, making a regrouping of the main forces to its left flank, led an offensive against Yukhnov, with the aim of capturing it and subsequently developing an attack to the northwest. The 1st Guards Cavalry Corps aimed at Vyazma, and the 10th Army received an additional task - to speed up the exit to the Vyazma-Bryansk railway rocade and capture the cities of Kirov, Lyudinovo, Zhizdra.

Under the sign of fulfilling the indicated tasks, the armies of the left wing of the Western Front carried out further offensive operations in January 1942.

Chapter six

General situation on the Western Front in mid-January

Breakthrough of the German defense in the Volokolamsko-Gzhatsk direction and pursuit of the enemy to the Gzhatsk defensive line

The general situation on the Western Front in mid-January 1942

of the year

By mid-January, the general situation on the Western Front was developing favorably for the Red Army, despite the significant losses and fatigue of the troops due to the continuous and long period of hostilities in the harsh winter and the stubborn resistance of the enemy. On January 14, the Military Council of the Western Front, by

private directives No. K-41, K-42 and K-43, set immediate tasks for the right wing, center and left wing of the front in the development of the ongoing action plan.

The immediate task of the right wing (1st, 20th and 16th armies) was to encircle and capture the Lotoshinsky and Gzhatsk-Vyazma groupings of the enemy in cooperation with the armies of the Kalinin dandy. On the right, the armies of the Kalinin Front delivered the main blow in the general direction of Alferovo, Sychevka, Vyazma. The armies of the center (5th and 33rd) received the task of encircling and defeating the Mozhaish-Gzhatsk grouping and reaching the Gzhatsk, Vyazma front (exclusively). Finally, the left wing of the front was instructed:

"1. The Kondrovo-Yukhnovskaya enemy group, stubbornly defending itself, seeks to hold the Warsaw highway and cover the governments of Gzhatsk, Vyazma and

Roslavl. 2. The immediate task of the armies of the left wing of the Western Front is to complete the defeat of the Kondrovo-Yukhnovskaya enemy grouping and, subsequently, by attacking Vyazma, encircle and capture the Mozhaish-Gzhatsko-Vyazma group of the enemy in cooperation w

armies of the Kalinin Front and the armies of the center of the Western Front.

Thus, it was planned to encircle and defeat the main forces of the central group of Germans with concentric attacks on two fronts, aiming these attacks in the general direction at Vyazma from the north, northeast, east and southeast.

On **the right** wing of the Western Front, by this time, a turning point was determined in the course of hostilities. As a result of the refusal to attack the German fortified zone on a wide front by all three armies and the subsequent transition to another method of action - an attack on a narrow front by concentrating forces and means of suppression from the armies of the right wing in one sector - a breakthrough was successfully made by the 20th Army on Volokolamsk-Gzhatsk direction and the prospect of operational use of this breakthrough by the 20th Army in cooperation with the 1st Shock and 16th Armies opened up. On January 17, Shakhovskaya and Ruza were occupied. A further offensive was launched on Gzhatsk.

Our offensive developed **in the center** in the first half of January. Parts of the Red Army first achieved the greatest results west of the Borovsk-Maloyaroslavets line, where in 15 days of January they advanced 30-50 km in a straight line, wedged between the Mozhaisk and Kondrovo-Yukhnovskaya German groups. To the north of the region of Borovsk, Maloyaroslavets, the offensive so far unfolded slowly; On January 14, Dorohovo was occupied in the Mozhaisk direction. Events unfolded more

quickly in the Mozhaisk direction in the second half of January, when, as a result of the advance of our units to the north and south of Mozhaisk, favorable conditions were created for us and the Germans, under the onslaught of the 5th and 33rd armies, began to retreat here to the west. On January 20, Mozhaisk was occupied. Our troops moved most slowly in the direction of Kaluga, Yukhnov, near the junction of the center and the left wing of the Western Front. A large group of Germans (the remnants of seven to nine divisions) stubbornly defended themselves in the triangle of Myatlevo, Linen Factory, Yukhnov, covering the Warsaw highway and the Kaluga-Vyazma

railway line. Despite the threat of coverage from both flanks by our advancing troops of the center and left wing (43rd, 49th and 50th armies and 1st

guards cavalry corps) and the gradual compression of the encirclement in the subsequent course of the fighting, the Yukhnov group of Germans firmly held the occupied area. The fight against her continued throughout January. On **the left**

wing of the front, the troops of the Red Army in the direction of Kaluga, Yukhnov (as has just been said) fought stubborn battles with the Myatlev-Kondrovo-Yukhnovskaya group of Germans, and the offensive here unfolded slowly. To the south, in the first half of January, our units were rapidly moving in the direction of Mosalsk, Kirov, Lyudinovo, and by January 15 they were already 100–130 km from the line of the Oka River, having reached the Vyazma-Bryansk railway road. On the lines reached in the first half of January, our offensive here basically ended. The second half of January includes the fight against the Yukhnov group of Germans and the gradual compression of the ring of its encirclement, the battles of the Belov task force for the Warsaw highway, as well as the German counteroffensive from Zhizdra to Sukhinichi, followed by the release of the besieged Sukhinich garrison. On the left flank of the front, the 61st Army (transferred on January 13 from the Bryansk Front) went deep into the rear of the Bolkhov group of Germans, surrounding it from three sides.

In the first half of January, the troops of the Kalinin Front delivered the main blow in the general direction of Sychevka, Vyazma, trying to intercept the railway and the Gzhatsk-Smolensk highway west of Vyazma, deprive the enemy of the main communications and, together with the troops of the Western Front, encircle and destroy the most powerful Mozhaishk-Gzhatsk-Vyazma grouping Germans. On January 15, the Kalinin Front captured Selizharovo; on the left wing, stubborn battles were fought with the Rzhev-Sychevsk group of Germans, which stubbornly defended itself, being in a semi-encirclement. In the second half of

January, the Kalinin Front developed a successful offensive in the southwestern and western directions, penetrating deeply into the enemy's disposition. On January 22, two left-flank armies (3rd and 4th armies) of the North-Western Front were transferred to the Kalinin Front.

At the end of January, the troops **of the Kalinin Front**, advancing from the Toropets region, fought on the outskirts of the city of Velizh. Another group of troops fought stubborn battles in the area of the town of Bely. Cavalry

the corps, moved south, intercepted the Vyazma-Smolensk highway west of Vyazma. In the area of Rzhev, Zubtsov, Sychevka, stubborn battles continued with a group of Germans who firmly held this area and at times switched to active operations). So, having launched a counterattack from the Rzhev region in a western direction, the Germans advanced here with a long tongue and cut off the communications of part of the troops of the Kalinin Front operating in the zone between Sychevka and Bely south of the Rzhev-Nelidovo railway. In the last days of January, a struggle was waged to restore these communications.[112] The right wing **of the Bryansk Front**, having transferred the 61st Army to the Western Front, occupied its former position during the second half of January.

Separate battles of local importance took place here; troops strengthened their positions, conducted reconnaissance. There were no major events of an operational scale in January in this direction.

Breakthrough of the German defensive line on the Lama River in period 10–15 January 1942

Due to the failure of the previous actions in the zone of the 1st, 20th and 16th armies to break through the enemy's defenses, the commander of the front troops, following the instructions of the Headquarters on the further defeat of the Germans, in his directive No. 0141 / op gave a new decision.

***"Commanders 1, 20, 16.
Copy of the beginning.***

General

Staff. No. 0141/

op, 6.1.42, 1:30 a.m. Card 100,000

1. In view of the fact that the 16th Army did not fulfill the task of breaking through the enemy's defenses, the task of breaking through is entrusted to the 20th Army.

For this purpose, to transfer to the command of the army

commander 20: a) from the 1st army - 29, 55 sbr and 528 ap, concentrating them by 8.1.42 in the areas of Shchekino,

Pushkari, Kalistovo; b) from the 16th army: 2nd Guards. kk with skibats, 20 cd, 22 brigade, 471, 523, 138, 537 ap, two PC

divisions, 40 and 49 brig. To concentrate the indicated parts by 8.1.42 in the areas:

2 Guards kk, 20 cd, 22 brigade - Chentsy, Yadrovo, Rozhdestveno; 40 and 49 sbr - Muromtsevo, Zhdanovo; 471 ap - Muromtsevo; 523 ap - Bol. Nikolskoye; 138 ap - Zhdanovo; 537 ap - Krasikovo; RS division - Yadrovo. 2. Commander 20, during 06–08.1.42, prepare a strike on the Mikhailovka, Ananyino, Posadinki front to complete the defeat of the enemy defensive zone and the subsequent capture of

Shakhovskaya. Attack

- on the morning of 9.1.42. The task of the first day is to reach the front of Bol. Isakovo, Kuryanovo, Chubarovo; the task of the second day was to capture Shakhovskaya with a further direction to Gzhatsk by a mobile group (2 guards).

kk, 22 brigade, 20 cd. 3. All regroupings should be carried out quickly and discreetly. The leading command staff of formations and units transferred from the 1st and 16th armies should be sent to Vozmishche by 9:00 on January 7, 1942 to receive 20 tasks and instructions from the commander on reconnaissance

and occupation of starting positions. 4. Report the execution, to the commander of the 20th

operation plan to submit by 24:00 6.1.42 Zhukov , **Khokhlov, Sokolovsky.**

Thus, the front command entrusted the 20th Army with the responsible task of breaking through the German defenses in the sector of the right wing of the front. Naturally, in connection with this, the 20th Army was to take the leading role in the forthcoming operation as a strike force of the entire right wing; the neighboring 1st and 16th Armies were to further develop the success of the strike group of the wing.[113] The commander of the 20th Army, in order—

No. 01 of January 7, gave the following description of the situation in his sector by that time:

"1. In front of the army front, they defend: a) at the line of Sidelnitsa, Timonino, units of 6 TD without materiel and the remnants of 106 RD;

b) at the turn of Aksenovo, Posadinka, Ludina Gora, Terentyevo - part 35 of the frontier; c)

at the turn of Pagubino, Ryukhovskoye, Spas-Ryukhovskoye, Konyashino - parts of the 5th TD (without the materiel). 2. To

the right, at the turn of Suvorovo, Putyatino, Vladychino
the 71st and 56th arr of the 1st army are defending.

Separation of a lawsuit with her. Nikita, claim. Ilinskoe, Shakhovskaya, suit. Zubtsov.

To the left, at the turn of the forest 1 km east of Chertanovo, forest 1 km / east of Kuzminskoye - 354th rifle division of the 16th army is defending.

Separation line with her Sosnino, Chernevo, lawsuit. Art. Alexandrino.

By the same order, in accordance with the directive received from the commander of the front, the commander of the 20th Army set tasks for the formations to break through the enemy's defensive line at the turn of the Lama River. According to his calculations, the concentration of all newly arriving units should have ended in the next two or three days, after which the army could launch an offensive.

The decision to break through and the task of the army by its commander were formulated as follows: **"The 20th Army on 9.1.42**

breaks through the enemy's defensive zone in the Zakharino, Timonino, Aksenovo, Posadniki sector, destroys the opposing enemy and by the end of the day reaches the Bol line. Isakovo, Kuryanovo, Chubarovo; upon reaching this milestone, from the morning of 10.1.42, it passes into the breakthrough in the direction of the Shakhovskaya group to develop the breakthrough.

Such a direction of strikes corresponded to the goal of the army's actions and brought our units to the Shakhovskaya area, which was an important road junction for the development of further actions in a westerly direction.

At the same time, the neighbor on the right, the 1st Army, had the goal of capturing the Lotoshino area, which, in turn, corresponded to the general goal of making a serious breakthrough in one of the main directions of the front.

The army troops were assigned the following particular tasks:

"4. The group of Major General Remizov (17th brigade and 145th brigade) in cooperation with the group of Major General Katukov to destroy

the enemy in the Zakharino area, to further hold the Mikhailovka, Zakharino area, ensuring the offensive of the main forces of the army from attacks from the north.

Demarcation line on the left - Mikhailovka, suit. Bol.

Goloperovo. 5. The group of Major General Katukov (1st Guards Tank Brigade, 1st Guards Brigade, 49th Brigade, 517 and 528 Popes, 7th and 35th Omgd) to destroy the enemy in the Bol. Goloperovo, Mal. Goloperovo, Kaleevo and by the end of the day reach

the Mal. Isakovo, claim. Afanasovo. Demarcation line on the left - Timkovo,

suit. Timonino, claim. Afanasovo, Starikovo. 6. 352nd Rifle Division with 537 Popes and 2nd Omgd, in cooperation with the Katukov group and 64th Rifle Regiment, destroy the enemy in the Timonino

area and reach the Afanasovo and Kuryanovo area by the end of the day. 7. The group of Major General Korol (331st Rifle Division, 40th Rifle Brigade, 31st Brigade, 138th and 523rd Popes, 15th Omgd) to destroy the enemy in the Zu

Demarcation line on the left claim. Zhdanovo, Ludina Gora, Fedtsevo, Cherries.

8. 35th brigade to destroy the enemy in the area of Ludina Gora, hiding behind part of the forces from the Pagubino side, advance on Terentyevo, Timoshevo.

Demarcation line on the left: Krasikovo, suit. Ryukhovskoye, Safatovo, Rozhdestveno.

9. 28th brigade to destroy the enemy in the Ryukhovskoye area, hiding behind part of the forces on Spas-Ryukhovskoye, advance on Dubosekovo.

It was assumed that on the front of the breakthrough of these units, a breakthrough development group would be introduced, consisting of one cavalry corps of a three-divisional composition, reinforced by one tank brigade and five ski battalions with the task of developing success in the direction of Shakhovskaya.

This group was assigned the following task:

“To the breakthrough development group, commander of the 2nd guards cavalry corps, Major General Pliev (2nd guards cavalry corps, 20 cd, 22 brigade and 5 ski battalions) on the night of 9 to 10.1 concentrate in the Mikhailovka, Timonino, Aksenovo area, from the morning of 10.1 enter the breakthrough c

plot Mal. Isakovo, Bolvasovo and, advancing in the direction of the Buholovo junction, bypassing Kuryanovo and Chukholovo from the south, by the end of the day, capture Shakhovskaya, meaning to advance on Gzhatsk in the future.

To ensure the actions of the units of the first echelon and the breakthrough development group, reserves were concentrated as part of two rifle brigades, which were given the following tasks:

"eleven. Reserve: a) 64 arr advance beyond 352 sd and strikes from the south to help capture Timonino. Subsequently, advance in the direction of Zubovo, assisting Major General Korol's group in destroying the enemy in the Zubovo area, and further advancing behind the right-flank part of Major General Korol's group; b) 55th Rifle

Regiment to enter Volokolamsk and prepare to repel possible enemy counterattacks from the directions of Ivanovskoye, Vladychino and st. Volokolamsk.

In addition to the artillery attached directly to the units of the army, a long-range artillery group (ADD) was formed consisting of two artillery regiments of the RGK and one mortar battalion. The task of the group included:

"22. Artillery ADD - 544 ap bm, 471 pap, 17 ogmd - to support the offensive of the group of Major General Katukov from 352 rifle divisions and the group of Major General Korol. Start art. preparation by special order, duration 1 hour. Ammunition consumption by 9.1–2.5 b / c.

Army Aviation (601st Bomber Aviation Regiment) was assigned the task of bombing on January 9 the area of Bolvasovo, Chubarovo, Fedtsevo, enemy reserves and rear areas in these areas.

The beginning of the attack was set by special order.

Already by January 7, new units began to arrive in the army (on January 6, the 55th Rifle Brigade in Zhdanovo and the 2nd Guards Cavalry Corps in the area of Chentsy, Yadrovo, Rozhdestveno began to concentrate in the army area).

On January 7, there were no significant changes at the army front. Remizov's group defended in Mikhailovka, 352nd Rifle Division

- East of Timonin. The Katukov group put itself in order and prepared for the offensive. The 331st Rifle Division fought for Posadniki. By the time the order was issued, the situation on

the front of the army was as follows. On the night of January 8, units of the army conducted combat and reconnaissance operations on the entire front. The Germans, putting up stubborn resistance, held the line of Sidelnitsy, Zakharino, Timonino, Posadniki, Ludina Gora, Kryukovo, Pagubino, Ryukhovskoye and Spas-Ryukhovskoye. In the depths behind the front line, they hastily built defensive structures. Enemy reserves, totaling up to an infantry regiment, were located in Zubovo, Safatovo, Dubosekovo, Klishino. In addition, according to aviation data, reserves and an enemy concentration of unknown numbers in the Shakhovskaya and Sereda areas were noted. On January 8, the troops of the 1st, 20th and 16th armies continued combat and reconnaissance operations on their former lines. At night, the units arriving in the army continued to concentrate in the areas assigned to them.

By January 9, the concentration of units was completed.[114] If ~~at~~ the beginning of January the quantitative and qualitative composition of the army said that it would not be able to carry out large-scale operations on its own, without appropriate reinforcements, then by January 9, its forces made it possible to organize an operation with a decisive goal. The strengthening of the army can be seen from the following table characterizing change in the size of the 20th army in the period of preparation for a breakthrough:

Число и месяц	Показатели						
	стрелковые дивизии	стрелковые бригады	лыжные батальоны	кавалерийские дивизии	орудия	минометы	танки
1 января	2	4	—	—	229	295	50
10 января	2	8	5	3	395	450	100
Увеличение	—	4	5	3	166	155	50
Соотношение	1:1	1:2	0:5	0:3	1:1,75	1:1,5	1:2

By the indicated time, the army occupied the front with a length of 20 km. A breakthrough was planned on a section of 8 km (Zakharino, Timonino, Aksenovo, Posadniki). For this purpose, the following were deployed and concentrated:

a) Remizov's group (17th rifle and 145th tank brigades); b)

Katukov's group (1st Guards Rifle Brigade, 1st Guards Tank Brigade, 49th Rifle Brigade, 528th and 517th Cannon Artillery Regiments, 35th and 7th Separate Guards Mortar Battalions); c) 352nd rifle division with 537th cannon artillery

regiment and 2nd separate guards mortar division;

d) a group of Major General Korol (331st Rifle Division, 40th Rifle and 31st Tank Brigades, 138th and 523rd Cannon Artillery Regiments, 15th Separate Guards Mortar Battalion); e) breakthrough development group (2nd

Guards Cavalry Corps, 20th Cavalry DIVISION, 22nd Tank Brigade, five ski battalions);

f) reserve (64th and 55th rifle brigades); g)

long-range artillery (544th high-capacity howitzer artillery regiment, 471st cannon artillery regiment, 17th separate guards mortar battalion). This group of troops provided the following operational density on the

breakthrough front: one rifle division per 1.5 km, 37 guns per 1 km, 39 mortars per 1 km, 12.5 tanks per 1 km (from the total calculation

concentration of two rifle divisions, six rifle brigades, five ski battalions, three cavalry divisions, four tank brigades, seven RGK artillery regiments and five mortar divisions in the breakthrough area).

With such an operational density, the ratio of forces on the direction of the main blow was as follows:

Силы и средства	20-я армия		Немцы		Соотношение	
	общее кол-во	на 1 км фронта	общее кол-во	на 1 км фронта	немцы	наши войска
Батальонов*	29	3,5	9	1,1	1	3,2
Орудий	300	37,0	90	11,0	1	3,4
Танков	100	12,5	43	6,0	1	2,0
Минометов	312	39,0	90	11,0	1	3,5

*

Cavalry regiments were not included in the calculation.

In the section of the holding group, the density was: one rifle brigade per 6 km of the front, two guns and seven mortars per 1 km of the front. These

figures give only a general idea of the balance of forces, since the data on the enemy are taken from the calculation of 65% of the staff of the German units operating on the breakthrough front.[115] In total, one infantry division was taken, reinforced by one regiment

of the ARGC. In addition, it should be borne in mind that the strength of both sides by this time had been significantly weakened by previous battles, therefore, a battalion should be understood as an organizational unit that numbered almost 100-150 bayonets on average. Approximately the same situation was with the enemy. There is no doubt, however, that by January 10, the superiority in forces was actually on the side of the 20th Army. Therefore, the success of the alleged breakthrough was ensured by

real combat strength. On January 9, the army troops took up their starting position for the offensive. However, on this day it did not take place, since the preparatory work had not yet been

completed. In his report on January 8, the commander of the 20th Army reported to the Military Council of the Front:

"1. Parts of the army during the day fought fierce battles on the former lines. 2. 2

Guards. kk, 1st guards. sbr, 40, 55 and 49 sbr finished concentration in their designated areas.

The replenishment for rifle brigades at the unloading station arrived in full, but less than half were transported directly in parts due to the lack of a sufficient number of vehicles (150 vehicles are used for transportation). Rifle

battalions of brigades without replenishment consist of 20-50 fighters and do not represent real

strength. 3. Army artillery regiments, excluding 523 ap , have become in position, however, they have from

1/4 to 3/4 b / c of ammunition. Military artillery has even less ammunition. Parts only in the evening sent a transport to receive ammunition at the Nakhabino station, where ammunition had been brought by that time.

On the basis of the foregoing, the commander of the army petitioned for delaying the start of the attack.

In accordance with this, the offensive was postponed by the front command to January 10. The start of the attack by the army commander was set at 10:30, with an hour and a half of artillery preparation. On the night of January 10, units conducted enhanced reconnaissance along the entire front and brought ammunition to their

original position. The neighbor on the right - 1 - I army - by this time was also ready for offensive to assist the 20th Army.

The action plan of the commander of the 1st Army was briefly as follows: for the offensive on the left flank of the army, the 56th,

71st, 46th Rifle Brigades, 4th and 7th Ski Battalions, 701st Cannon Artillery Regiment and 5th Separate Guards Mortar Battalion. With these forces, the army was to advance from the front of Vladychino, Mikhailovka (claim) with the immediate task of capturing Spas-Pomazkino, and the further - Lvov. 16th Army in connection with

the transfer of most of its units to the 20th Army (2nd Guards Cavalry Corps with ski battalions, 20th Cavalry Division and 22nd Tank Brigade, 40th and 49th Rifle Brigades, 471 , 523rd, 138th and 537th guns

artillery regiments, 2nd and 17th guards mortar battalions) defended on the occupied front. The general offensive of our

troops began on January 10. At 0800, the artillery of the 20th Army opened fire on the sector of the 35th and 28th Rifle Brigades, and at 0900 artillery preparation began on the breakthrough front. At 10:30, after artillery

preparation, the troops of the 20th and 1st armies went on the offensive along the entire front, accompanied by artillery fire. The Germans,

unable to withstand the simultaneous blow of our troops, in the very first hours of the battle, in separate groups, began to retreat in a westerly direction. The front line of the enemy defense was broken relatively quickly. However, this was worth considerable effort, since the enemy surrendered all the settlements he occupied only after repeated stubborn attacks by the advancing units. So, after a three-

time attack with the support of the tanks of the 145th Tank Brigade, Remizov's group, by 4 p.m., together with the 1st Guards Rifle Brigade, occupied Zakharino, where, in stubborn street battles, they destroyed more than two companies of enemy infantry (400 corpses were found), which offered resistance from houses and cellars of the village. The retreating small groups of the enemy blew up the bridge across the Yatvenka River in order to impede the advance of our units. In general, there were up to two battalions (presumably from the 6th Panzer Division) with three tanks in Zakharino. During the capture of Zakharino, the headquarters of the regiment was destroyed; among those killed were a lieutenant colonel and two other officers. Thus, in this sector, the German defense was actually broken through in the afternoon. Katukov's

group by 12 o'clock, bypassing Bol. Goloperovo from the north, approached the forest at the 186.5 mark, advancing in cooperation with the 1st Guards Rifle Brigade. The latter, together with Remizov's group, also participated in the battle for Zakharino.

The 49th Rifle Brigade fought a stubborn battle together with the 352nd Rifle Division behind Timonino, after capturing which, by 13:30, it continued its attack on Kaleevo, Bol. Goloperovo. In Timonin, parts of the brigade found up to 100 corpses and took 10 prisoners.

The tank regiment of the 1st Guards Tank Brigade supported the offensive of the 1st Guards Rifle Brigade with two T-34 tanks, and the offensive of the 49th Rifle Brigade with one KB tank and four T-34 tanks. During the attacks in the Timonino area, two tanks burned down (KB and T-34); in addition, one T-34 tank was damaged.

After capturing Timonin (where up to an enemy infantry battalion was destroyed), the 352nd Rifle Division continued its offensive on Afanasovo (up to two enemy battalions defended in front of the division's front). In the battle for Timonino, parts of the division captured: 3 anti-aircraft guns, 4 mortars, an ammunition depot was destroyed. The enemy left up to 250 corpses on the battlefield.

By 2 p.m., the 64th Rifle Brigade reached the eastern edge of the forest, south of Timonino, and, leaving part of its forces to clear the forest of enemy groups defending in it, continued the offensive on Zubovo. The 331st

Rifle Division, in cooperation with the 64th Rifle Brigade, fought an unsuccessful battle with the organized enemy defenses in the forest east of Aksenovo from 14:00, encountering strong fire resistance here. Against the division in the direction of Ananyino, Posadniki stubbornly defended up to two enemy battalions. The 40th Infantry Brigade unsuccessfully advanced on Posadniki. On the left flank of the army on the front of Ludin Gora, Spas-Ryukhovskoye position remained unchanged. The 35th and 28th rifle brigades were fighting at the same lines by 1300 hours. Their attacks in connection with the stubborn defense of the enemy's occupied lines were not successful. Before the front of the 35th rifle brigade, as before, they defended up to an infantry regiment, in front of the 28th rifle brigade - up to two battalions.

The 2nd Guards Cavalry Corps did not take part in the battle, being in the former area. At 13 o'clock, forward detachments were sent from the corps to the Ivanovskoye, Timkovo region. By 1 pm on January 11, these detachments were concentrated in the Timkovo area.

The successfully developing offensive of the army due to poor meteorological conditions on January 10 was not supported by army aviation. Enemy aircraft did not show any activity that day either. The reserves of the army commander were not brought into battle.

In the army area, as in the rest of the front, there was a deep snow cover; actions of small and medium tanks on

the breakthrough area was difficult, and in some places even impossible, so the offensive of the tank groups that day did not receive sufficient

development. The actions of the infantry also took place in difficult conditions (deep snow, heavy

snowstorm during the day). In addition, the Germans, leaving a number of fortifications of the first line on their left flank, retreated into the depths to a relatively short distance, and by the end of the day on January 10, they again organized defenses, but

already in the depths of the defensive zone. As a result of all this, the breakthrough of the first day did not develop successfully, and the army troops limited themselves to only a small advance to the west (2–3 km).

The control of the battle during the first day of the offensive was provided relatively well. Communication was maintained by radio and telephone with Remizov's group and, intermittently, with the 352nd Rifle Division. In addition, such means as the telegraph and liaison officers were used. Communication with the neighbor on the right (1st Army) was maintained by telephone and radio, with the neighbor on the left (16th Army) - communications officers on airplanes

and by radio. Thanks to the actions of the 20th Army, the advance of the units of the 1st Army from January 10 was carried out quite successfully. So, the 56th Rifle Brigade, advancing that day on Spas-Pomazkino, reached the forest 1 km west of Vladychino and continued to move forward with battle, the 2nd Guards Rifle Brigade launched an attack on Sidelnitsy, on the eastern outskirts of which it was met by a strong enemy barrage fire. Despite this, on January 11, at 14:00, she, together with the 46th Infantry Brigade, captured the village of Sidelnitsy. On the

night of January 11, units of the 20th Army carried out a partial regrouping, continuing the offensive on the right wing in the direction of Bol. Goloperovo and Zubovo. The Germans

tried to hold back the advance of the army troops with concentrated fire from the surviving points and counterattacks, but their attempts did not lead to positive results. At 9:45 on

January 11, the German infantry, up to a battalion, moved from Spas-Pomazkino to Zakharino in a counterattack, which, however, was repulsed by artillery fire and a counterattack by our infantry with tanks of Remizov's group units.

At 10:30, the Germans repeated the attack with fresh forces in the amount of up to 300–400 people - but a significant part of this group was covered by the fire of our artillery and mortars, as a result of which the enemy, leaving a large number of corpses on the battlefield, withdrew in the western and southwestern directions.

At 13:30, three enemy tanks with a group of infantry managed to break into Bol. Goloperovo, where they remained until the end of the day. As a result, this day passed in mutual counterattacks and did not introduce major changes in the general situation

at the front. On the night of January 12, the troops of the right wing of the front persistently continued the offensive, and by 3 o'clock, despite strong fire resistance and enemy engineering obstacles, parts of the Katukov and Remizov groups reached the line: the eastern outskirts of Ilyinskoye, the western outskirts of Bol. Goloperovo.

Throughout the day of January 12, the Germans stubbornly clung to every settlement.

By 13 o'clock the advanced units of the Katukov group reached the area Afanasovo, where they fought the Germans.

By the same time, the 2nd Guards Cavalry Corps began concentration in Bol. Goloperovo, Zakharino, Mikhailovka.

On the left flank of the strike group, stubborn battles continued between the 64th Rifle and 31st Tank Brigades in cooperation with the 331st Rifle Division behind Aksenovo, where the Germans still stubbornly held their lines. In this area, our troops suffered significant losses.

Thus, on the third day of the fighting, units of the right wing of the army wedged into the enemy's defenses to a depth of 5 km, i.e., the troops actually overcame the first defensive line of the Germans without meeting the expected stubbornness of the enemy here due to his small numbers.

As for the 1st Army, it continued the offensive, successfully fulfilling its tasks. This circumstance was facilitated by the fact that the left-flank units of the Kalinin Front were also successfully advancing westward. Already on the night of January 12, the 47th Rifle

Brigade of the 1st Army captured Alferyev, and the 56th, 2nd Guards and 44th Rifle Brigade

the brigades fought for Gusevo and Spas-Pomazkino, which they captured

on January 12. In connection with the successful actions of the center of the strike group, the commander of the 20th Army decided on January 13 to introduce a

mobile group into the resulting breakthrough. On the morning of January 13, the 2nd Guards Cavalry Corps entered the breakthrough to develop success in the direction of Shakhovskaya in order to fulfill the directive of the front commander to

destroy the enemy grouping in this area. The corps, inflicting losses on the enemy, at 4 p.m. on January 13 passed the Chukholovo-Vysokovo line, advancing along two

roads in the general direction of Stepankovo-Shakhovskaya. The rest of the troops that day continued to

expand and deepen the breakthrough, occupying the following position:

- Remizov's group captured Ilyinsky and advanced on Bol. Isakovo; • Katukov's group fought for Nazarevo; • The 352nd Rifle Division moved from Bolvasovo to Vysokovo following the

- advancing advance units of the mobile group; • The 64th rifle brigade occupied Zubovo

- by 12 o'clock and advanced on Fedtsevo, Chubarovo; • The 331st Rifle

Division captured Aksenov and advanced on Kozino. In connection with the release of the cavalry corps into the breakthrough, the commander of the 20th army ordered the army units to advance behind the 2nd guards

cavalry corps with the task of reaching the Shakhovskaya, Vishenki, Dyatlovo line. The Germans, with the remnants of the defeated 23rd, 106th Infantry and 6th Tank Divisions, together with two or three infantry battalions thrown from the reserve, tried to organize a new defensive line on the Kolpyan River and further along the Vysokovo-Beli line in order to prevent further advance of the

army units to the west. However, even here their efforts were unsuccessful. On the same day, the Germans tried to stop the advance of the 1st Army on the line of Gusevo, Novinki, but the attempt did not give positive results.

to push units of the enemy's 23rd Infantry Division in the northern and western directions, expanding the gap at the junction with the 20th Army.

Having overcome the line of dugouts at the Gusevo line and repulsed the enemy counterattack from the same point, by 4 o'clock on January 14, units of the army were fighting fierce street battles in

Gusevo and Novinki. The resistance of the Germans at this turn reached the limit. Intense artillery and mortar fire, counterattacks in separate sectors in order to restore the lost position - all this was used by the enemy in order to delay the advance of the Red Army units as long as possible and ensure the withdrawal of their main forces in the Gzhatsk direction. In the middle of the day,

when Gusevo was already taken, up to 200 enemy soldiers counterattacked the 56th rifle brigade from the direction of height 151.9, but the counterattack was not successful, and the enemy, having suffered heavy losses, retreated to its original position.

At the same time, the 46th Rifle Brigade repulsed two German counterattacks with a strength of up to 300 people, supported by five tanks from Lvov and Revin, and two enemy tanks were knocked out by the brigade's

artillery. On January 14, units of the 2nd Guards Cavalry Corps were stopped by the Germans with a force of up to two battalions at the line of Chukholovo, Vysokovo. But, supported by the 47th aviation division, the Katukov group and the 352nd rifle division with artillery attached to them, in the middle of the day they destroyed the enemy in these areas and continued to move west. By the end of the day, the 3rd and 4th Guards Cavalry Divisions were fighting to the west of the indicated line with enemy remnants retreating in the Gzhatsk direction.

In accordance with the new directive of the front commander, which required a change in the direction of the Cavalry Corps offensive instead of Shakhovskaya to Sereda, Gzhatsk (in order to encircle the Mozhaisk enemy grouping that had begun to withdraw), the troops began to develop a breakthrough in a southwestern direction. Parts of the 2nd Cavalry Corps advanced on Andreevskaya, and the 1st Guards Rifle Brigade - on Zdnezhye.

On January 15, the advance of the strike force was insignificant: the groups of Remizov and Katukov fought east of the Rozhdestveno-Sizenevo line; The 49th Rifle Brigade captured

Burtsev; The cavalry corps took control of the Andreevskaya and Novikovo lines.

The left wing, on January 14-15, had significant successes: the group of General Korol took Ludina Gora (for which stubborn battles were fought for two weeks), Ryukhovskoye and Spas Ryukhovskoye, Safatovo, Dubosekovo. It must be assumed that after a clearly marked breakthrough in the direction of Shakhovskaya, the Germans considered it advantageous to leave these points as being under flank attack from the north. This was facilitated by the fact that the offensive of the left wing of the army did not stop from January 10. The expected withdrawal of the Germans in this area was also confirmed by the fact that the left wing, with its relatively weak composition, advanced 6–8 km on January 14 and 15.

The front line of the 20th Army by this time on the right wing stood out sharply to the west, then turned sharply to the east and went in the direction of Safatovo, Spas-Ryukhovskoye. The favorable position of the strike force in this case made it possible for the enemy to strike in the direction of Gzhatsk.

Until the outcome of January 15, the breakthrough of the shock group developed at a relatively slow pace. The distance from Timonino to Andreevskaya is 16 km. It took the strike group of the 20th Army 5 days to overcome it. Consequently, the daily rate of advance of this group was equal to 3.2 km (for advanced divisions). Considering that the mobile group (cavalry corps with attached units) was the main active force in the development of the breakthrough in the army strike group, this rate of advance should be recognized as low. True, on January 13 and 14, the cavalry had to fight stubborn battles at the turn of the Kolpyan River and Vysokovo, but this situation did not exclude the possibility of a faster advance in the right direction, even if at the cost of some losses. The need for a quick advance was

clear to the personnel of all units and, in particular, the cavalry corps, but the density of settlements and deep snow did not allow to bypass the fortified German units, and therefore had to fight for every village, for every piece of terrain. This caused a delay in the advance. Attempts to seep between

fortified points led to heavy losses (especially in the horse composition) and did not give positive results.

If in summer and autumn the cavalry acted successfully due to off-road driving, then in the conditions of a deep snowy winter, its successes in certain areas were relatively limited.

Subsequently, the rate of advance of the army increased slightly, but still in some areas reached 5–8 km per day. On the front of the neighbor on

the right - the 1st Army - the offensive these days proceeded more slowly. On the night of

January 15, only reconnaissance searches were conducted at the front of the army. After the daytime fighting on January 14, the units put themselves in order and prepared to resume the offensive on the morning of January 15. The Germans showed no activity at night, limiting themselves to rare harassing artillery and mortar fire on the battle formations of the army.

From 04:00 on January 15, the right-flank units of the army went on the offensive in order to pin down the enemy's left flank and thereby prevent him from regrouping towards his right flank, weakened by recent battles. On the left wing, against the 46th Infantry Brigade, the Germans nevertheless launched two unsuccessful counterattacks at the turn of the forest east of Lvov. The 2nd Guards Rifle Brigade and one battalion of the 50th Rifle Brigade, as a result of an enemy counterattack from the northwestern outskirts of Novinki, were pushed back to the southwestern edge of the forest south of this point, where they put themselves in order and prepared for the offensive. As a result of daytime

battles, the right-flank troops of the 1st Army, which attacked Maleevo, Uzorovo, Ivanovskoye and tried to cut the Brenevo-Gavrilovo road, were not successful due to the strong resistance of the enemy, and by the end of the day they continued to wage fierce battles on the outskirts of these settlements. Neighboring

on the left (16th Army), in connection with the withdrawal of units of the 20th Army to the Ryukhovskoye, Spas-Ryukhovskoye line, from January 15, it received the opportunity to advance in a westerly direction. This circumstance, undoubtedly, was facilitated by the beginning of the withdrawal of the Germans in front of the front) of the army.

Having received a blow from the 20th Army in the north, the Germans, apparently, did not risk the available forces to continue defensive battles against the 46th Army, knowing from experience that this army had shown itself well in previous battles.

As a result of the offensive of the 1st, 20th and 16th armies in the period of January 10–15 and the breakthrough by the troops of the 20th army, the entire right wing of the Western Front got the opportunity to develop a further offensive, pursuing the retreating parts of the 3rd and 4th tank groups and infantry enemy divisions.

The situation on the left wing of the Kalinin Front by this time remained without major changes. The left-flank 30th Army, in cooperation with the 1st Shock Army, was advancing in the general direction of Pogoreleye Gorodishche.

The pursuit of the Germans to the Gzhatsky defensive line in period January 15-25

On January 16, the troops of the 20th Army continued to develop success in the direction of Sereda, Gzhatsk. Without meeting the stubborn resistance of the Germans, by 1900 our units had reached the line of Rozhdestveno, Starikovo, Burtsevo, Andreevskaya, Novikovo.

On the left wing, the 28th and 35th rifle brigades, continuing the pursuit of the enemy, reached the Novlyanskoye-Schekotovo line by 18:00. The Germans,

retreating in the direction of Sereda, Gzhatsk and trying delay our advance, used minefields.

At the same time, the neighboring armies also advanced successfully. At 10 o'clock the 1st Army went over to the offensive on the entire front. On the night of January 16, the Germans, having withdrawn their main forces, exhausted by battles, to the west on the night of January 16, offered weak resistance with cover units at the turn of Maleevo (7 km northeast of Lotoshin), Brenevo, Teleshno, Yaropolets, Elizavetino, Vasilyevskoye. By 4 p.m., the troops of the 1st Army had captured this line and, pursuing the retreating small groups of the enemy, continued to advance in a westerly direction.

The 62nd Rifle Brigade, having occupied Maleevo, went to the Lotoshino area, which by 17:30 was taken by the 41st Rifle Brigade.

On the same day, the 56th Rifle Brigade occupied Kulyshno, the 46th Rifle Brigade - Polezhaevo, the 2nd Guards Rifle Brigade -

Yelinarkhovo, and the 50th rifle brigade reached Aksakov.

Thus, on January 16, the army advanced 12–15 km, encountering weak enemy resistance. On January

15, at 24 o'clock, the Germans' withdrawal was discovered in front of the 16th Army, units of which began an immediate pursuit of them. Already on the night of January 16, our troops captured the villages of Chertanovo, Konyashino and fought for Milovanye (36th Infantry Brigade). At the same time, Kolyshkino and Ovinishche (354th Rifle Division) were occupied. However, the rest of the 16th Army did not succeed that day.

had.

On January 17, the 20th Army pursued the Germans in all directions of their waste.

By this time, the following had been created at the army front position:

a) Its main forces on the right wing reached the Shakhovskaya line and south to the [Ruza River](#).^[116] All tanks, army artillery, guards mortar divisions and aviation supported the offensive of this group. b) On the rest of the front, at the turn of the Ruza River,

the 331st Rifle Division remained, in which there were an insignificant number of fighters, several T-60 tanks of the 31st Tank Brigade (due to deep snow they were not used), and the 35th Rifle Brigade, which had up to 200 fighters. Thus, the main forces of the 20th Army, with all their equipment, concentrating

on the right wing, struck in the general direction of Sereda, Gzhatsk. The auxiliary (fettering) grouping did not actually conduct offensive operations, but moved forward "only because the enemy retreats to the southern sector without our strong pressure" (from the report of the commander of the 20th Army). The Germans, retreating, continued to resist the shock

group, defending all settlements and mining roads.

During January 17, the army fought with the retreating enemy at the line of Shakhovskaya, Khovan, Dubrovino, Yakshino and further along the Ruza River, and by 17 o'clock on January 18, its units reached the front of Zhilye Gory, Parshino, Dyatlovo, Yakshino, Bol. Sytkovo, Vasilievskoe.

At the same time, the 1st Army continued to pursue the weak covering units of the Germans (platoon, company). By the end of January 18, the army received a new task from the front command: to transfer its sector to the 20th Army and go to the front reserve. From 10

o'clock on January 18, the troops of the 1st Army, having allocated pursuit detachments, with the main forces stopped at the line of Dulepovo, Frolovskoye, Robni, Elizarovo, Sudislovo for regrouping in accordance with the order received.

On January 18, the right-flank troops of the 20th Army, continuing the offensive, began to advance in a northwestern direction. The 49th, 64th and 28th rifle brigades were allocated to the sector of the 1st Army to change its units. On January

19, the 1st Army was preparing to regroup, continuing to fight the enemy with pursuit units. In this position, the fighting of the

1st Shock Army as part of the Western Front actually ended, after which (after being replaced by units of the 20th Army), it was withdrawn to the reserve in the Klin region for staffing and rearmament.

On January 19, units of the 2nd Guards Cavalry Corps fought on the outskirts of Sereda and, having captured this point (where the Germans left a large number of dead and significant trophies), by the end of the day they reached the Merklovo area. By the nature of the enemy's actions, it was clear that his grouping, which was in front of the 20th Army, was retreating with the main forces to Gzhatsk. Therefore, units of the army, pursuing the retreating fascists, had to reach this point as quickly as possible in order to cut off the main routes of retreat to the west of the entire Mozhaisk grouping of the enemy, which by this time was fighting with its center against the 5th Army in the Mozhaisk region.

It is interesting to note one fact that confirmed the withdrawal of the Germans in front of the front of the 20th Army to Gzhatsk: in the village of Yakshino (5 km northeast of Sereda), a Polish translator who was in the service of the Germans left a note for our troops with the following content:

"The army corps is broken. Divisions 106, 35 and 23 retreat to Nikolskoye, and then to Gzhatsk, in divisions no more than 580-600 Human".

This message from an unknown patriot was quite consistent with that period of the real situation.

After the fighting in the Sereda area, the pace of advancement of army units increased significantly. So, on the right wing of the 49th Infantry Brigade, on January 20, they already captured the Goldinovka, Strelka area, thus breaking 10-12 km in a day. In the center, the Katukov group occupied Nov. Rameshki, advancing in a south-western direction for 10 km. The 2nd Guards Cavalry Corps had little progress, and by the end of January 20, only Dubronivka and Dunilovo had captured, fighting for Nikolskoye.

On January 17 and 18, the retreating German troops tried with strong rearguards to delay the advance of the 16th Army at the line of Chernevo, Lapino, Leonidovo, but as a result of a stubborn battle, the right-flank units of the army captured these points and already on January 20 fought for Reptino. The 354th Rifle Division occupied Terekhovo, Knyazhevo, Ignatkovo that day and continued the offensive with the main forces in the direction of the Bolychevo state farm. The 9th Guards Rifle Division, having captured the villages of Soslavino, Isakovo, Potapovo, pursued the enemy in the direction of Myshkino.

In this position, the army was caught by the directive of the Military Council of the front, according to which the command of the army with army units was transferred to a new direction (Sukhinichi); the remaining troops of the army, as well as its sector of the front, were transferred to the 5th army.

Thus, the 16th Army ended the three-week battles in this direction in its previous composition. It advanced by the center by 15 km, and by the flanks by 22–25 km, with an average advance rate of 3–5 km per day. Despite the limited

success achieved by this army, it played a significant role in the general system of operations of the right wing of the front during this period, as a holding group of troops that did not give the enemy the opportunity to use part of their forces in other directions.

The withdrawal of the 1st and 16th armies from the right wing of the Western Front significantly influenced the further course of the offensive of the 20th army, which was supposed to develop success alone on the 40-kilometer front in the Gzhatsk direction. In addition to this main task, the army had to maintain close cooperation with the Kalinin Front, whose left-flank troops by that time were on the same line with the 20th Army. By January 22, units of the 20th Army reached the Knyazhy Gory station, Borisovka, Novo-

Aleksandrovka, Kosilovo, Nikolskoye, where they met relatively stubborn resistance. These were advanced positions, apparently in front of the main resistance zone, located 6–10 km west of this line.

By January 23, the army command (based on data received from local residents) knew that the Germans in the area of Berezka, Sapegino and Retkovo were carrying out defensive work. By the same time, units of the army reached the line of the Derzha River near Vasilyevskoye, Kuchino, Barsuki, Gravatovo, where they engaged the enemy's outposts on the move. This guard did not play the role intended for him, and on January 24, units of the army approached the main German resistance zone, which closed the northern and northeastern approaches to Gzhatsk. It should be noted that already on January

24, the Germans began to launch counterattacks in certain sectors of the front. So, for example, on January 24 at 11 o'clock, the Katukov group in the Krutitsa area was counterattacked by two infantry battalions supported by two tanks from the direction of Savino, as a result of which parts of the Katukov group retreated to the western outskirts of Titovo. At about 20:00, the 64th Rifle Brigade, being attacked by two German companies with tanks, left the eastern half of Kuchino and retreated into the forest east of this point.

This actually ended the advance of the 20th Army in the western direction. True, during January 25, some units managed to advance a little further west (the 2nd Guards Cavalry Corps reached the line of Bol. Trisela, Bykovo), but these individual successes did not significantly affect the nature of the battles.

rendered.

Thus, the successful breakthrough of the 20th Army near Volokolamsk ended with the main forces of the army reaching the line indicated above by the end of January. From that moment on, the army waged protracted offensive battles with the Germans who had gone on the defensive. The 6th Panzer, 106th and 35th Infantry Divisions continued to operate against the army. In addition, units of the 7th and 11th Panzer and 14th Motorized Divisions were noted. During the withdrawal, these divisions were covered by rear guards (from a company to a battalion), reinforced by 2-3 tanks and artillery. Army

attempts to overcome enemy defenses are positive
did not bring results.

On January 26, the chief of staff of the army reported to the chief of staff of

the front: ***"Units of the army reached the intermediate line of the enemy, passing along the line Vasilyevskoye, Lvovo, Krutitsa, Petushki, Palatki, Bol. Trisely, Bykovo."***

Apparently, by that time the army headquarters did not have a complete understanding of the defense system encountered by the army and assessed the main resistance zone of the main defensive line as an "intermediate line". Subsequent battles brought clarity to this issue. From the

moment the army approached the indicated line, the fighting took on a fierce character. Both sides suffered heavy losses: only the 2nd Guards Cavalry Corps lost 340 killed and 817 wounded during the period from January 20 to 30. In addition, 338 horses were killed and 145 injured. By the end of January, the

army was in the same organizational structure, but with units severely weakened in battle. Therefore, it is natural that with the approach to the new defensive zone, the army met with significant difficulties, which were determined by:

a) lack of sufficient reserves; the entire shock group of the army was actually drawn into the battle; b)

stretching the front of the army, as already noted, up to 40 km; c) insignificant numerical and combat composition of the army; d) the poor provision of infantry with skis, without which the deployment of maneuvering actions of small units was

difficult; e) large

snow cover (up to 75 cm). All this taken together caused a halt in the offensive. The enemy used this pause to strengthen their positions.

Operational and tactical conclusions from the experience of breakthroughs defensive lines in January 1942

Successfully carried out breakthrough of the German defense at the turn rivers Lama and Ruza allows us to draw the following conclusions:

1. The German defense as a whole is built in relation to the existing regulations and instructions, as amended by the course of the war itself. It is quite a serious obstacle for the attacker. Usually, a defense organized under conditions of limited time does not have long-term structures, but the capture of a complex of hastily built bunkers, trenches and buildings adapted for defense requires no less effort from units than when breaking through a defense prepared in advance.

When organizing a breakthrough of defensive lines, it must be borne in mind that preparations for it must be carried out carefully, taking into account the nature of the German defense. Should be drawn

focus on suppressing automatic and mortar fire

enemy on defensive lines. 2. The nature of

the German defense (in which the enemy turned out to be quite tenacious and stubborn) requires the advancing troops to concentrate the main strike groupings on a relatively narrow front, provided with means of suppression according to the appropriate calculation. Attempts to break through on a broad front without the presence of forces corresponding to such a front do not give positive results. The example of the operational breakthrough of the

20th Army in the conditions of the Great Patriotic War is one of the successful ones, since in this operation preparations for the offensive were thought out and correctly organized, and a breakthrough was actually carried out, which yielded major results. It was carried out on an eight-kilometer front (with a

total army front of 20 km) with a sufficiently high saturation density,

which ensured not only the suppression of the entire enemy defense fire system, but also the success of the further offensive of the army.

Attempts to break through the fortified zone along the entire front of the army (as was indicated by the examples of the previous offensive of the 1st, 20th and 16th armies), without concentrating large forces and means of suppression, did not lead to positive results.[117]

3. Experience has shown that when breaking through defensive lines, it is advantageous to use the preparatory period to wear down the enemy's manpower and partially destroy the materiel (by artillery fire, combat aircraft). This method of preparing for a breakthrough was

carried out in all three armies of the right wing. True, one must reckon with the losses that the troops will suffer during this period, but the subsequent success of a decisive blow in a certain direction will in most cases justify these losses. If the offensive of the 1st and 16th armies did not have the direct result of breaking through the enemy's defenses, then it nevertheless contributed to the final success of the 20th army. It is advantageous to carry out actions to wear down the

enemy on a wide front in various groupings in order to hide from him the direction of the actual strike of his units. This method was used by the command of the 1st Army, which consistently, in flank groupings, conducted a similar offensive for 10-12 days. 4. The presence of a corps-scale cavalry group requires the army commander to determine the time for bringing this group into the

breakthrough. In the sector of the 20th Army, this period was scheduled quite correctly, although the cavalry had to fight at the very moment of entering the gap. True, the latter was not conceived as an unhindered advance of the cavalry in the direction of the breakthrough; however, in this case, it is possible that the postponement of this date to about January 14 would be more appropriate; the neighboring 1st and 16th armies by this time would also have had more real results of their offensive.

5. Intelligence was a weak point in all armies, as a result of which, for example, the advancing 1st Army was forced to state that "the enemy broke away and began to retreat." And since the withdrawal of the Germans was usually carried out under the cover of darkness, the effectiveness of the battle (in the sense of destroying enemy manpower and capturing it

material part) was significantly reduced. In addition, the same army, after two days of fighting on January 17, put itself in order, thereby giving the enemy the opportunity to slip away from the blows.

Thus, the successful nature of the actions of the armies depended largely on the organization of intelligence. In the 20th Army, more attention was paid to this issue, as a result of which the pace and direction of the offensive (in the spirit of the requirements of the front command) were completely

fulfilled by it.[118] 6. It should be noted that the success of breaking through the German defenses at the turn of the Lama and Ruza rivers was facilitated by the fact that the command of the front and the armies carried out close cooperation on the flanks of the advancing armies. This moment was of great importance in terms of ensuring the overall success of the

right wing of the Western Front. 7. Instructive is the experience of organizing the rear and logistical support of a breakthrough, set out in Chapter Eleven.

Chapter Seven

Mozhaisk-Vereya operation

(January 14–22, 1942)

The value of Mozhaisk as a stronghold

Occupation of Dorokhov and the expected capture of Ruza by our troops opened up the prospect of an attack on Mozhaisk.

Among the numerous strongholds at which the enemy tried to delay our advance, Mozhaisk undoubtedly played an outstanding role.

It is located on the most important route running from west to east; its importance is increased by the large number of roads converging in it. In addition, Mozhaisk, due to its natural conditions, can be easily fortified: from the west it is protected by a strong Borodino position, from the east the approaches to Mozhaisk are covered by forests and difficult-to-pass ravines. By fortifying Mozhaisk, the Germans hoped to keep the retreating front

on the meridian of this point. A large number of bunkers surrounded Mozhaisk in a semicircle. Significant artillery resources were concentrated in the city; strong strongholds were located on the approaches to it.

The plan of the command of the Western Front to master Mozhaisk. Army command activities

Having captured Dorohovo by the end of January 14, the troops of the center and left wing of the 5th Army reached the line of Fedotovo, Aleksino, Modenovo, NovoNikolskoye.

The 33rd Army, pursuing the enemy, at that time went to the front of Simbukhovo, Klin, Ivkovo, Blagoveshchenskoye. To the left of it, the 43rd Army successfully advanced; on January 14, it occupied the city of Medyn. The flanks of the 33rd Army were secured, and it had the opportunity to strike at the enemy's Vereisk grouping, and then develop a strike in a westerly direction - into the enemy's Vyazemsky front, or to the northwest - bypassing the Mozhaisk grouping
Germans.

The front command initially adopted the second option. After the 33rd Army captured Vereya, it aimed at Vaulino, Yelnya, in the rear of the Mozhaisk grouping of the enemy, which should be destroyed in cooperation with the 5th Army.

But from January 5, when such a task was set, until January 14, when the troops of the 5th Army occupied Dorohovo, and Ruza was on the eve of the fall, the situation changed: Mozhaisk by this time was in the position of the enemy's advanced resistance center; the main grouping of his forces in this direction was located in the Gzhatsk, Vyazma region. The combined actions of the two armies now had to be directed not to the capture of Mozhaisk, but to the destruction of the Gzhatsk-Vyazma grouping of the enemy.

So in his directive of January 14, the commander of the Western Front, General of the Army Zhukov, set the task for the troops of the 5th and 33rd armies:

“The enemy is trying to delay the advance of the 5th and 33rd armies. The immediate task of the armies of the center is to surround and defeat the Mozhaisk-Gzhatskaya enemy

grouping. Task: 1) the 5th Army, no later than 16.1, to capture Mozhaisk and further develop a strike on Gzhatsk. The border on the left is NovoNikolskoye, Yelnya, B. Lomy.

2) The 33rd Army, continuing to develop the main attack on Vaulino, Yelnya, bypassing Mozhaisk, by the end of 15.1, complete the defeat of the Vereisk group and capture Vereya. In the future, Ragozino and Komyagino will advance.”[119]

Following the instructions of the front commander, the commander of the 5th army assigned the following tasks to the troops:

“The 5th Army takes possession of Mozhaisk, covering it from the southeast and southwest. Task of the day 17.1 - reaching the line: Ilyinsky, Borodino, Artemki, having VP on the Bezzubovo line, st. Koloch, Yelnya.

Accordingly, the divisions were aimed in such a way that the direction of the main attack lay on the left flank. The 33rd

Army, at the time of receiving the directive from the front commander, was advancing on Vereya. The commander of the 33rd Army left

divisions the same tasks, focusing on the actions of the right flank of the army, which was supposed to cover Vereya from the north.

The combat balance of forces and

means In the Mozhaisk-Vereya operation, two armies participated from our side - the 5th and 33rd, from the enemy's side two army corps - the 9th and 7th. The balance of power was as follows:

We

have Rifle divisions 13

Motorized rifle divisions 1 Rifle brigades 1

The enemy has

Infantry divisions

6 Motorized divisions

1 Tank divisions 1

The front of action of the parties was 50–60 km. The depth of the operation, with the grouping of enemy forces in the areas of Mozhaisk and Vereya, was planned at

40–50 km. Superiority in strength was on our side. But in general, it is very difficult to establish superiority according to the data presented, since the losses on both sides were large, not amenable to accurate accounting. In addition, in the current situation, an accurate calculation of the forces and means participating in the Mozhaisk operation is hardly of decisive importance, since it was not arithmetic data that came to the fore, but the political and moral qualities of the troops and the ability of commanders to manage their subordinate units in a harsh winter environment. . In December, the Germans were defeated

on both flanks of the troops advancing on Moscow. In January, under the blows of the Red Army, these flanks more and more rolled back to the west, putting those units that the Germans had in the center at a disadvantage. These units continued to stubbornly defend themselves, and on this the fascist command to a large extent built the hope of holding its front. But the operational position of the center was fragile, it was now under attack from the flanks, the political and moral state of the troops

dropped.

The mood of the Soviet troops, in contrast to the German, was good. Parts of the Red Army pursued the enemy, more and more imbued with confidence in the final victory over him. This multiplied their strength and raised the creative initiative of the command.

The course of hostilities in the Mozhaisk

operation Continuing to pursue the enemy after Dorohovo, the divisions of the center and the left flank of the 5th Army - 144, 50, 82, 108 and 32 rifle divisions - on January 16 reached the line of Kostino, Krasny Stan, Conception, Aleksandrovo, Mikhailovskoe, Bugailovo. The left-flank 32nd Rifle Division of the 5th Army entered the rear of the German grouping that was defending Vereya at that time. Having captured Korovin and Lytkin, the 32nd Infantry Division was to blockade Borisovo in order to prevent the enemy from assisting their Vereisk grouping. Thus, the actions of the left-flank units of the 5th Army made it easier for the 33rd Army to complete the task of capturing Vereya. On January 16, the

33rd Army approached Vereya with its main forces and fought on the southern and southeastern outskirts of the city, at the same time trying to bypass it from the north side. The enemy offered stubborn resistance, trying to withdraw here those units that at that time were on the front of Tyutchevo, Kupelitsy, Klin. On January 16, at 10 o'clock, the 222nd Infantry Division captured Moshkovo and fought for Kupelitsy. The battle did not give definite results until the 1st Guards Motorized Rifle Division arrived in time to help her. With the approach, her Tyutchevo-Klinskaya grouping of the enemy was captured in a "bag", and her systematic withdrawal to Vereya was disrupted. A battle broke out in the Kupelitsa area, in which the fascist units suffered heavy losses. But the

enemy stubbornly defended their positions. Vereya did not give up, the fighting here took on a fierce and protracted character. The 1st Guards Motorized Rifle Division, breaking through from the outskirts of the city into it, was supposed to fight there for almost every house in which the Nazis were sitting. Often the enemy turned into counterattacks, which our troops fought back with heavy losses for the enemy.

The battle, which began at Vereya on January 16, dragged on until night and continued until dawn on January 17. At night, the remnants of the German troops defeated at Kupelitsa and badly battered units from Vasilyev, Kolodezey and Panov approached Vereya. The enemy was concentrating his forces in Vereya, gathering his fist here in order to break through from

here to Mozhaisk in case of encirclement. While the battles were unfolding near Vereya, the 5th Army continued to advance towards Mozhaisk with its left flank and center. By the morning of January 17, the 50th Infantry Division of this army captured the village of Pervomaisky; The 82nd Rifle Division with the 60th Rifle Brigade fought for Chentsovo and Chertanovo; The 108th Rifle Division, having broken enemy resistance, occupied the edge of the forest south of Otyakovo and intercepted the Yamskaya-Vereya road; The 32nd Rifle Division blockaded

Borisovo and advanced forward detachments in a westerly direction. As a result of such actions, communication between the German garrisons in Mozhaisk and Vereya was interrupted, and they were isolated from each other. Vereya was engulfed from three sides, and her fate was to be decided in the coming days. The offensive of the 5th Army squeezed

Mozhaisk from the east and southeast; his fate was also a matter of the near future. On the night of

January 16-17, the enemy began to withdraw from Ruza, and on January 17 the city was already in our hands. With the fall of Ruza, the 19th Rifle Division, the 20th Rifle and 43rd Tank Brigades, which besieged it, were released, which joined the troops advancing on Mozhaisk. But it was still difficult to capture this city, while enemy units occupying Vereya were in the rear of the advancing troops of the 5th Army. Hence, the question of Mozhaisk was associated with the preliminary liquidation

On January 18, the 222nd, 113th Rifle and 1st Guards Motorized Rifle Divisions fought heavy battles near Vereya and in the city itself; the remaining divisions of the 33rd Army destroyed the small garrisons of strongholds northwest of Vereya, intercepting the enemy's retreat in this direction.

On January 19, at 4:30, after a fierce battle, Vereya was occupied by our troops. Defeated parts of the enemy, leading

rearguard battles, retreated to the west. With the occupation of Vereya, the threat to the rear of the left-flank units of the 5th Army, advancing on Mozhaisk, disappeared. On January 19, the position of the German garrison in Mozhaisk became extremely difficult. From the north, the 19th Rifle Division of the 5th Army fought for Nastasino, Kurny, Khanevo, Shebarshino, trying to reach the line of the Moskva River in the direction of Bychkovo, Garetovo. The 144th Rifle Division was approaching the line of Prudnya and Pavlishchevo in combat; The 50th Rifle Division, in cooperation with the 20th Tank Brigade, was entrenched in the Makarovo, Teterino area; The 108th Rifle Division fought for Yazevo. "Pincers", covering Mozhaisk, penetrated deeper and deeper to the west and

squeezed ever closer around the city. On the night of January 20, the 19th Rifle Division, after a fierce battle, occupied Garetovo and Khotilovo with detachments of skiers; the division pursued the defeated enemy in the direction of Uvarovo. At the same time, on the left flank, the 32nd Rifle Division, after breaking through the German front in the Yazevo, Lytkino sector, advanced along the Moscow-Minsk highway and occupied Bol. Ponferki. Mozhaisk was under the threat of complete encirclement. The Germans, seeing the impossibility of holding him in their hands, began to retreat.

On January 20 at 8 o'clock, breaking the resistance of the enemy, our units (82nd Infantry Division) broke into Mozhaisk. By 13:30 they passed the city and came out to the west of it, to the line east of the edge of the forest, northwest and west of Kukarino. In Mozhaisk, the 5th Army captured large trophies, including 20 guns, 76 vehicles, 3 warehouses with ammunition and commissary property. The most important node of enemy resistance was destroyed. It was necessary to prevent the enemy from creating a new junction on the tracks leading from Mozhaisk to Gzhatsk.

To this end, immediately after the capture of Mozhaisk, the pursuit of the Germans in the direction of Uvarovo was organized. Their flight here, in particular, through the Borodino field, was in many ways reminiscent of the hasty retreat to the west of the French army, when, in the atmosphere of the already beginning cold weather, after the battle of Maloyaroslavets (October 24, 1812), she was forced to return to the old path she had come, - on the devastated Smolensk road. Tied with scarves, dressed in peasant sheepskin coats, felt boots, hats with earflaps, in women's fur

the coats taken from our population, the retreating German troops were like Napoleon's detachments fleeing from Russia. Contrary to their habit, they did not have time to destroy the monuments of glory of Russian weapons on the Borodino field, but in impotent rage they burned the Borodino Historical Museum. Soviet troops followed on the heels of the retreating enemy, crushing and destroying his rearguard units.

The Germans' attempt to linger in Uvarovo ended in failure for them. On January 22, after a stubborn battle, this point was occupied by the 5th Army. Mozhaisk offensive operation was over.

Conclusions _

the following points:

1. The operation developed as a set of interrelated events - the occupation of Dorokhov and Ruza, the capture of Vereya and, finally, the attack on Mozhaisk. All of them are in a logical connection with each other and follow from the initial event - Dorokhov's classes. The success near Dorokhov had a direct impact on the fate of Ruza, Vereya and created the prerequisites for capturing

Mozhaisk. 2. Dorokhov, Ruza, Vereya and Mozhaisk were heavily fortified. Nevertheless, they could not hold out for long and fell as soon as they were outflanked. From this it follows that the defense of one or another point will be strong when it is linked with the strong defense of its neighbors. The fortress of modern defense is determined not only by its depth, but also by its sufficient width, which makes it impossible for the attacker to shoot through the defended area with real fire.

3. A huge role in the fate of Ruza, Vereya and Mozhaisk was played by the moral factor - the preponderance of the moral forces of our troops over the fascist ones. He ensured the success of the operation, carried out in difficult conditions.

4. In the tactics of our troops, it should be noted: a) the skillful organization of the offensive of the troops of the 5th and 33rd armies, the fortified points of the enemy, as a rule, were taken not by frontal attacks, but bypass and coverage;

b) a preponderance of forces was created in the decisive areas of the offensive, which made it possible to achieve success in a shorter time; in the 5th army -

on the left flank, in the 33rd - on the

right; c) the offensive was carried out, despite the difficult winter conditions, at a fairly high pace - in six days (from January 14 to January 20), some of the units (for example, the 32nd rifle division) fought a distance of 50–60 km and, without stopping, continued the pursuit of the enemy. The

disadvantages of the operation carried out include the increased caution in the actions of our units near Mozhaisk itself, which was the result of poorly organized reconnaissance - while the troops bypassing Mozhaisk (50th, 108th and 32nd rifle divisions) slowly moved forward, fearing to be attacked on the flank from Mozhaisk, there were no enemy troops in the city, except for a small group of submachine gunners covering the withdrawal of their units. This ignorance of our troops made it possible for the enemy to avoid a larger defeat here. In the actions of the German troops defending Ruza, Mozhaisk and

I believe it should be noted:

a) skillful use of large settlements as nodes of resistance;

b) perseverance in the conduct of combat - and at the same time sensitivity to the threat that arises on the flanks. Strongholds, nodes of resistance, etc., were abandoned by the Germans when their flanks were bypassed: persistence in the conduct of the battle disappeared; the fascist German troops abandoned their positions and equipment with a fairly energetic maneuver of our units on their flanks.

Chapter Eight

The offensive of the armies of the left wing on Kondrovo, Yukhnov, Kirov, Lyudinovo from January 5–9 to January 31, 1942

The situation on the left wing of the front by January 5, 1942

The situation in the zone of operations of the armies of the left wing of the Western Front by the beginning of the struggle for access to the Vyazma-Bryansk roadway and Warsaw highway was quite difficult.

Having suffered setbacks in the battles near Vysokinichi and Detchino and having lost the line of the Oka River, the Nazi troops, retreating to the west under the blows of our units, sought to linger on other, previously prepared positions. Such positions were the Kondrovo fortified line, the Linen Factory, defensive lines northwest and west of Kaluga, on the outskirts of the Yukhnovsky bridgehead, the important Sukhinichi railway junction, the areas of Mosalsk, Meshchovsk, Kirov, Lyudinovo, Zikeevo, Zhizdra and other strongholds and centers of resistance, which the enemy continued to reinforce, pulling up reserves from the rear. In particular, by January 12, that is, in the midst of the battle in this direction, the fresh 208th Infantry Division, brought from France, and units of the 4th Panzer Division were transferred to the Zhizdra and Zikeevo area by January 12, that is, in the midst of the battle in this direction. The 211th Infantry Division and others were later brought up to the Lyudinovo area from Smolensk.

parts.

Consequently, the struggle of the armies of the left wing on the indicated lines was carried out in the face of growing enemy resistance. On the other hand, this struggle was greatly complicated by the winter conditions in which our troops had to conduct an offensive. If we take into account that parts of our armies were thoroughly exhausted by the previous stubborn battles, then the complexity of the situation in which we had to start the fight for the Varshavskoe highway and the Vyazma-Bryansk railway road becomes understandable.

During this period, the Kondrovo-Yukhnovo-Medynskaya enemy grouping was the strongest, the speedy defeat of which opened the way for the main forces of the armies of the left wing to Vyazma. The efforts of the 43rd, 49th and 50th

armies and the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps. The

10th Army, providing the extreme left wing of the front, was supposed to intercept the Vyazma-Bryansk railway in the Kirov, Lyudinovo area by an offensive in the western direction, depriving the enemy of the opportunity to

maneuver along this road. The grouping of enemy troops in front of the armies of the left wing of the front and the balance of forces by January 5, 1942 are shown in the table below:[120]

Противник			
Соединение	Численность боевого состава	Кол-во орудий всех калибров*	Кол-во танков
268-я пехотная дивизия	4000	До 40	—
260-я пехотная дивизия	3000	35	—
52-я пехотная дивизия	5000	45	—
137-я пехотная дивизия	3500	35	—
17-я пехотная дивизия	3500	35	190
Итого	19000		—
131-я пехотная дивизия	4000	40	—
31-я	3000	35	—
36-я моторизованная дивизия	3000	40	—
19-я танковая дивизия**	До 1000	До 30	15-20
Итого***	11000	145	15-20
296-я пехотная дивизия	3000	35	—
216-я пехотная дивизия	6000	50	—
56-я пехотная дивизия	3000	35	—
10-я моторизованная дивизия	2500	40	—
Рота 19-й танковой дивизии****		15	10
Итого	14500*****	175	10
Всего на левом крыле	44 500*****	510	Около 30

Наши войска			
Армия	Численность боевого состава	Кол-во орудий	Кол-во танков
49-я армия			
Итого	37700	295	—
50-я армия и 1-й гвардейский кавалерийский корпус			
Итого***	37500	271	34
10-я армия			
Итого	48250	203	—
Всего на левом крыле	123450	769	34

* The final data included divisional artillery guns: against the 49th and 50th armies (Yukhnov direction) - 252 guns; against the 10th Army (Sukhinich direction) - 96 guns.

** According to the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff (d. No. 3/1), by January 5, the division acted as an infantry (73rd Infantry Regiment) in the area south of Yukhnov; the bulk of the tanks were sent to Roslavl for repairs.

*** Taking into account the 230th Infantry Division, which was in reserve, the total number of enemy rank and file against the 49th, 50th armies and the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps will be 33,760

Human.

The human composition is not taken into account. ***** Without taking into account the 56th Infantry Division, which was withdrawn to the reserve (which then acted against the 61st Army), the number of enemy personnel against the 10th Army by January 5 was 11,500 people. ***** Including the 230th Infantry Division - 48,260 people.

The ratio in manpower, artillery and tanks by armies, according to the table above, was as follows:

49th Army

in manpower - 2: 1 (in favor of our troops) in
artillery - 1.55: 1 (in favor of our troops) in tanks -
both sides did not have them

50th Army and 1st Guards Cavalry Corps in manpower - 3.5:

T1 (in favor of our troops) in artillery - about 2: 1 (in
favor of our troops) in tanks - 2: 1 (in favor of our
troops)

10th Army

in manpower - about 3.5: 1 (in favor of our troops) in
artillery - 1.16: 1 (in favor of our troops) in tanks -
the absolute superiority of the enemy

The above calculation shows that we had superiority (on average) a little more than two and a half times in manpower along the entire left wing, and one and a half times in artillery. In tanks in the Yukhnov direction, we had almost twice the superiority, and in the Sukhinich direction, the superiority remained with the enemy. However, during the described period of hostilities, there were few tanks on both sides, and they did not play any significant role.

If we take into account the transfer by the Germans by January 12 to the Zhizdra, Lyudinovo region of the fresh 208th Infantry Division and later the 211th Infantry Division, as well as the motorized regiments of the 4th Panzer Division, pulled up by the same time to the Zikeev area, then the mentioned superiority will decrease accordingly and in terms of manpower, our superiority will be approximately two times, and equality in artillery.

In addition, the offensive against the enemy, who had gone over to a stubborn defense in advance, in conditions when the harsh winter of 1941/42 had fully come into its own, further reduced our superiority in forces and made it very difficult for the troops of the left wing of the front to carry out their tasks.

According to the plan of the command of the Western Front, the efforts of the 49th and 50th armies were concentrated on defeating the Kondrovo-Yukhnovo-

enemy Medyn grouping. This task was solved in cooperation with the 43rd Army. The 1st Guards Cavalry Corps was part of the forces to assist the armies of the left wing, and the main forces were to advance on Vyazma. The 10th Army, with the bulk of its troops, operated in a western direction, with the task of reaching the Kirov and Lyudinovo region in order to intercept the Vyazma-Bryansk railway there. In the spirit of the

implementation of this plan, hostilities unfolded on left wing of the Western Front after January 5, 1942.

The battles of the 49th Army for Kondrovo, Linen Factory and the development of the offensive until reaching the Varshavskoe highway in the Myatlevo-Yukhnov sector

After the units of the 49th Army of General Zakharkin reached the line of Vasisovo, Bukrino, Torbeevo, the army command, on the basis of front directive No.

“The 49th Army (5th Guards, 133rd, 238th, 173rd Rifle Division, 30th, 34th, 19th Rifle Regiment), inflicting the main blow in the direction of Kondrovo, Voronka (8 km southwest of Myatlevo), together with the 43rd Army, destroys the Kondrovskaya grouping of the enemy and by the end of 12.1.42 it reaches the line: Badgers, Nikola-Lenivets.

In accordance with this order, the 5th Guards Rifle Division received the task: continuing the offensive in the direction of Butyrka, by the end of January 9, move out with the main forces to the area of Yablonovka, Nekrasovo, Voraksino (all points northeast of Kondrovo 12 km), and advance units to Adamovskoye (5 km north of Kondrovo), conducting reconnaissance at

Kondrovo. By the end of January 9, the 19th Rifle Brigade was supposed to reach the Kozhukhovo-Zazhovo line (1 km southeast of Kozhukhov), and advance units to Kondrovo. The 133rd Rifle Division was instructed to continue the offensive in the direction of Ladovo, Zapolye, Kartsevo (all points 5-15 km east of Kondrovo) and to concentrate its main forces in the area of the last two points by the end of January 9; advanced units were ordered to withdraw to the line Kondrovo, Tolkachevo.

By the end of January 9, the 173rd Rifle Division was supposed to reach the Gribanovo area (8 km southeast of Kondrovo), where it would concentrate, with the task of striking at Kondrovo.

The 238th Rifle Division, according to the order, withdrew the main forces to the Redkino area, while the advanced units were tasked with capturing the Linen

Factory. In accordance with the instructions of the front, the army command drew the attention of all unit commanders to the organization of clear interaction with neighbors, the organization of trouble-free communications and the promotion of

headquarters closer to the troops. Particular attention was paid to the organization and conduct of the offensive, bypassing and enveloping the enemy's fortifications, with extensive use for this purpose of ski units as

mobile detachments. In front of the front of the 49th Army, by January 10, units of the 260th, 137th, 52nd, 31st and other infantry divisions of the enemy were marked in the first line, as well as the 36th motorized division in the second line; the main forces of this division were under Yukhnov. Parts of the mentioned enemy divisions simultaneously acted against the 50th Army in the Yukhnov direction.

The Germans set themselves the task of holding the Kondrovo line, the Linen Factory and thereby preventing our troops from entering the Warsaw highway. To this end, the Kondrovo area, the Linen Factory was fortified in advance and prepared for a stubborn defense. As it turned out later, the settlements in this area were turned into strongholds with dugouts and bunkers. The gaps between the points were shot through, and the Germans erected ice ramparts in the main directions. Consequently, the units of the 49th Army faced a rather difficult task - without stopping the pursuit, to immediately seize this pre-prepared position, on the nature of the fortifications of which the army command, apparently, did not have enough complete data at that time. The task of the army was further complicated by the fact that the area in the offensive zone was closed and, due to winter conditions, did not have a sufficient number of roads.

On the morning of January 9, units of the 49th Army, continuing the offensive, reached the following lines: the 5th Guards Rifle Division, initially encountering a relatively small fire

enemy resistance, by the end of January 9, she fought on the way to Nekrasov. The battle lasted until 11 January. The Nazi troops in the Nekrasovo region offered strong resistance. In the morning of January 11, their stubbornness was broken, and our units captured Nekrasov. In order to capture the Kondrovo-Medyn road, on the morning of January 11, a ski battalion was sent in the direction of Adamovskoye.

The 19th Rifle Brigade, after a stubborn battle, occupied Ivanovka by the end of January 9 (4 km northwest of Detchino) and, continuing the offensive, by the morning of January 10, reached the Pesochni area (10 km north west of Detchino). From this area, the brigade advanced in the direction of Murzino.

The 133rd Rifle Division, overcoming the resistance of machine gunners, reinforced with light and heavy machine guns, and enemy infantry units with mortars, fought Baranovka, Korneevka, Durovka abroad. Parts of the division moved forward with difficulty. Only by the morning of January 11, having bypassed Korneevka from the north, did the 133rd Rifle Division capture it and reach the line of Ladovo, Karamyshevo (both points 2 km west of Korneevka).

The 173rd Infantry Division was advancing in the direction of Durovka. Attempts to bypass this point from the south and from the north were not successful due to the strong flanking fire of the enemy from Korneevka and Mokrishchi. Only by the morning of January 11 was it possible to break the enemy's resistance in this area and capture Durovka. Leaving the detachment to clear the Durovka area of the Germans, the 173rd Rifle Division continued to advance on Karamyshevo, assisting the 133rd Rifle

Division with its maneuver. The 238th Rifle Division fought a stubborn battle for Torbeevo all day on January 9th. Attaching great importance to this point, the fascist German units made every effort to keep it behind them. The commander of the 238th Rifle Division ordered his troops to bypass Torbeevo from the north, and sent part of his forces to Mokrishchi in order to assist the neighbor on the right - the 173rd Rifle Division.

This maneuver was a success, on the morning of January 11, the German resistance in the Torbeev area was broken, and units of the 238th Infantry Division launched an offensive in the direction of the Linen Factory. In order to cover the Linen Factory, a separate

ski battalion, which moved along the southern bank of the Sukhodrev River.

During the 11th and the first half of the day on January 12, the troops of the 49th Army continued their offensive in the indicated directions. The resistance of the Nazi units continued to grow along the entire front, especially on the line of strongholds - Makovtsy, Zhuino, Zapolye, Gribanovo, Kashenki (all points 5 km east of the Kondrovo line, Linen Factory). The most

stubborn battle had to endure the 5th Guards Rifle Division, the 30th and 34th Rifle Brigades for Makovtsy and Andreevka. A particularly fierce battle took place in Andreevka, where the enemy fought literally for every building. The battle for this point lasted for 12 and 13 January. Only by the end of the day on January 13, we managed to break the resistance of the Germans and capture Makovtsy and Andreevka, after which the offensive of our units developed in the direction of Adamovskoye, Akishevo (3 km northwest of Kondrovo).

The 19th Rifle Brigade, in cooperation with the ski battalion of the 133rd Rifle Division, occupied the Murzino, Zhuino, Zapolye area (2 km south of Bol. Bolyntov) on January 13, but was driven out by a strong enemy counterattack from there and retreated to its original position to Bol. Bolyntov, where he established himself. On the morning of January 14, the 19th Rifle Brigade went on the offensive again and, as a result of the battle, regained its lost position.

The 133rd Rifle Division, overcoming the resistance of the Germans, moved forward. The

173rd Rifle Division, having broken the enemy defenses in the Gribanovo area (0.5 km north of Redkino), Redkino, captured both points on the morning of January

14. The 238th Rifle Division, despite the stubborn resistance of the Nazi units in the Kashenka area (3 km south of Redkino), occupied this point by the morning of January 14.

During January 14, the 49th Army launched an offensive on the entire front. Everywhere it was necessary to overcome fire resistance and engineering barriers used by the Nazi troops during the retreat. On the night of January 15, the offensive of the army continued unabated, despite the unrelenting resistance of the enemy. Bypassing the nodes of resistance Akishevo,

Makarov, Tolkachevo, Utkino (1 km north of the Linen Factory), the 49th Army with its advanced units by the morning of January 15 reached the Adamovskoye, Linen Factory road.

Thus, the period of fighting from January 9 to 15 can be characterized as a period of struggle for the enemy's defensive positions between the fortified Kondrovo line, Linen Factory and the Kaluga-Maloyaroslavets railway.

As can be seen from this description, the fighting took place with the extreme tension of the forces of the attacker and the stubborn resistance of the defender.

Attaching great

importance to the speedy occupation of the Kondrovo, Linen Factory area, the front command, by directive No. 412, transferred the 12th Guards Rifle Division (formerly the 258th) to the 49th Army, setting the army the task of speeding up the offensive and reaching this area by the deadline. According to the instructions of the front, the 12th Guards Rifle Division

was to simultaneously put pressure on the rear of the enemy units operating against the 50th Army in the Yukhnov direction. Subsequently, the 12th Guards Rifle Division was supposed to be concentrated in the area of Ozerna, Davydovo, Subbotino (1 km north of

Davydov). After a partial regrouping that followed in connection with the inclusion of the 12th Guards Rifle Division in the army, units of the 49th Army resumed offensive operations on January 16,

directing their efforts towards capturing the Kondrovo area, the Linen Factory.

The offensive proceeded as follows: the 5th Guards Rifle Division with the 30th and 34th Rifle Brigades, according to the order of the army commander, was heading for Nikolskoye, bypassing Kondrovo from the north, covering itself from Kondrovo with one rifle regiment. In the Nikolsky area, the 5th Guards Rifle met a stubborn enemy, supported by strong mortar fire.

division

resistance

The 133rd Rifle Division with the 19th Rifle Brigade advanced on Tolkachevo. Parts of the division were subjected to a heavy fire attack by enemy mortars from the Tolkachevo, Star. Utkino (4 km northwest of the Linen Factory) and, having suffered heavy losses,

they retreated to a sector east of the Polotnyany Zavod-Tolkachevo highway, where

they entrenched themselves. The 173rd Rifle Division, advancing on Utkino with the aim of covering the Linen Factory from the north, was counterattacked by the enemy on the morning of January 17, supported by heavy machine-gun and mortar fire; the counterattack forced the division to retreat to the

linen plant-tolkachevo highway. The 238th Rifle Division, leaving one regiment at Zhilnevo to pin down the enemy south of the Linen Factory, by the morning of January 17, the main forces crossed the Shan River and, bypassing Durnevo, reached the eastern approaches to Beli, where they started a battle. The movement of the division took place under heavy enemy flanking fire from Durnev and Mukovnin (4

km south of the Linen Factory). The 12th Guards Rifle Division fought on the western bank of the Ugra River, advancing in the direction of Mal. Rudnya; at the same time, part of its forces blockaded

Sabelnikovo from the north and east. The general result of the offensive of our troops on Kondrovo, Linen Factory by January 17 was as follows: the troops of the center of the 49th Army (133rd and 173rd rifle divisions), having suffered heavy losses, did not move forward, and in some places even retreated. One of the reasons for this failure was the frontal attack method used by our troops in capturing

fortified points. Noting the failure of frontal attacks on Kondrovo, Linen Factory, on January 17, the front headquarters demanded that the commander of the 49th Army send at least one rifle division around the Linen Factory from the south in the general direction of Durnevo, Sloboda, Galkino. In order to more successfully complete the task, the army, according to the instructions of the front command, had to regroup, and the 12th Guards Rifle Division was left with the same task - to strike at the rear of the enemy acting against the 50th Army. In accordance with these instructions, the

command of the 49th Army on the morning of January 18 carried out a partial regrouping, the essence of which was as follows.

The 5th Guards Rifle Division continued its offensive in the former direction.

The 173rd Rifle Division was heading to bypass the Linen Factory from the south in order to develop the strike of the 238th Rifle Division in the direction of Durnevo, Sloboda, Galkino. By the end of January 19, the division was ordered to reach the area of these points, in order thereby to cut off the enemy's escape route to the west.

On the Kondrovo front, the Linen Plant, the enemy was pinned down by the 133rd Infantry Division and the 19th Infantry Brigade, whose active operations were to ensure the 173rd Infantry Division's entry into the new area. The 564th artillery regiment of the 133rd rifle division was ordered to be ready to support the 173rd rifle division with its fire in the direction of Sloboda.

The task of the 238th Rifle Division remained basically the same - an offensive in a north-western direction in order to intercept the escape routes of the enemy Kondrovskaya grouping. By the end of January 19, the division was scheduled to enter the Potapov area.

And, finally, the 12th Guards Rifle Division, by the end of the same day, went to the Ozerna, Davydovo, Subbotino area with the subsequent development of the strike on Pogorelovo.

On the morning of January 18, units of the 49th Army, after regrouping, went on the offensive along the entire front.

The 5th Guards Rifle Division, having met strong enemy resistance, continued the battle at the same line. The 133rd Rifle Division, bypassing the Linen Factory from the north, captured Utkin in battle. The 173rd Rifle Division, interacting with the 238th Rifle Division, covered the Linen Factory from the south. By the combined efforts of the 133rd and 173rd divisions, by the end of January 18, the Linen Factory was taken. The 238th Rifle Division fought at Beli; the enemy, with a strength of up to 500 men with heavy machine guns, stubbornly held Beli, trying to prevent our spread to the northwest and to ensure the withdrawal of his units from Kondrovo and the Linen Factory. The 12th Guards Rifle Division, developing a blow in the direction indicated to it, fought a fierce battle for Matovo and Rudnya (3 km west of Sabelnikovo), which it captured on the afternoon of January 19. During January 19, the 49th Army again continued the offensive along the entire

front, developing success on both flanks. By this time, the 5th Guards Division, having captured Nikolsky after a stubborn battle,

broke through the enemy front north of Kondrovo. Our breakthrough created a threat of encirclement of the enemy grouping in the Kondrovo area, as a result of which the Nazi units began to withdraw from this area. Thus, the

maneuver of the 5th Guards Rifle Division on the right flank, and the 173rd and 238th divisions on the left flank of the 49th Army, with the 133rd Rifle Division actively pinning down in the center, led to a favorable outcome of the battles for the fortified line Kondrovo, Linen Factory. Having suffered a defeat in the struggle for this line, the Nazi troops, waging covering battles, withdrew to a new prepared line - Aidarovo, Kostino, Ostrozhnoye, Bogdanovo, Potapovo. After January 20, the 49th Army launched an offensive in a new

grouping. By directive from the front, the 173rd Rifle Division was transferred to the 50th Army and transferred to its left flank. The 12th Guards Rifle Division was transferred to the 10th Army and transferred to the Sukhinichi area for operations against enemy units advancing from the Zhizdra and Zikeev area. The command post of the army headquarters after January 22 was located in Kondrov.

After the remaining units of the 49th Army reached the line of Aidarovo, Kostino, Ostrozhnoye, Bogdanovo, Potapovo, stubborn battles began again for the possession of these points.

The 5th Guards Rifle Division with the 30th and 34th Rifle Brigades subordinate to it[121] fought on the Aidarovo, Kostino, Ostrozhnoye, Bogdanovo lines (claim.). The Germans put up especially strong resistance in Ostrozhnoye, where on January 25 our units had to fight in the streets. On January 28, the 133rd Rifle Division captured Bogdanov and developed a strike on Sloboda. The 238th Rifle Division encountered the strongest enemy resistance in Dorokhi (1 km northeast of Potapovo), the battle for which lasted until January 28. By January 28, enemy resistance on the Aidarovo, Kostino,

Ostrozhnoye, Bogdanovo, Potapovo lines was broken. Using bypass and blocking of individual strongholds, units of the 49th Army by January 31 reached the front of Rudenka, Fedyukovo, Shimaevka. An attempt by the enemy to delay our offensive at the turn of the Izver River of success

Did not have.

By the same time, the 43rd Army, adjacent to the right, was fighting the enemy on the Tetevo, Vorsobino, and Myatlevo fronts. On January 29, the 415th Rifle Division, together with the 1st Guards Motorized Rifle Division, captured Myatlevo in battle.

After January 31, the 49th Army, in cooperation with the 50th Army, advanced in a southwestern direction along the Varshavskoe Highway, covering Yukhnov from the northeast.

Thus, during the offensive from January 9 to January 31, 1942, the 49th Army had to break through two fortified enemy defensive lines.

Despite the

tactical possibilities of covering individual German strongholds, the 49th Army was promptly forced to attack the enemy's Kondrov grouping frontally, almost with a frontal attack. This was one of the reasons for the relatively slow development of hostilities. The neighboring 50th Army, being pinned down by the

stubborn defense of the Germans northwest of Kaluga and near Yukhnov, was unable to fulfill the front's directive to reach the rear of the enemy's Kondrov grouping. The 1st Guards Cavalry Corps also failed to capture Yukhnov on the move and part of the forces to go in the direction of Medyn, to the rear of the Kondrov group of Germans. This was due to increased enemy resistance on the ground, increased activity in the air and the harsh conditions of a harsh winter. Weak material and technical security, lack of means of communication and general fatigue of the human and horse staff, who made difficult transitions for a long time, also played their role.

The offensive of the 50th Army in cooperation with the 1st Guards cavalry corps on Yukhnov and Warsaw highway

After the completion of the Kaluga operation, the fighting of the bulk of the troops of the 50th Army developed in the Yukhnov direction. The most stubborn battles took place on the front of Kudinovo, Zubovo (southeast of Yukhnov), where a strong enemy grouping was concentrated. The strike group of the 50th Army operated against it, consisting of the 340th, 154th (without the 437th regiment) rifle divisions and the 112th tank brigade[422] with reinforcements . tough fights,

also took place on the right flank of the army, northwest of Kaluga, where the fascist troops, relying on prepared defenses, delayed our offensive.

The command of the Western Front, by directive No. 269 of January 9, defined the task of the 50th Army as follows: " ...

Commander 50 is to defeat the Zubov-Yukhnov group and capture Yukhnov no later than 11.1.42; in the future, interacting with Belov's group, the main forces will advance in the general direction to Slobodka (north-west of Yukhnov 27 km), Vyazma. On the right flank, interacting with the 49th Army, advance in the general direction on Pushkino (15 km northeast of Yukhnov), bearing in mind that the left flank of the army is provided by the advancement of two rifle divisions in the area of st. Art. Chiplyaevo, Zanoznaya (east of Spas-Demensk) ... "

In accordance with the directive of the front, the commander of the 50th army set tasks for his troops, according to which the strike group continued to fight against the enemy's Zubov-Kudinov grouping: the 154th rifle division and the 112th tank brigade were to capture Yukhnov, bypassing it from the southwest, and the 340th Rifle Division was ordered on the night of January 10 to intercept the Varshavskoe highway in the Strekalovo area (9 km northeast of Yukhnov). The right-flank divisions were to continue the offensive in the previously indicated direction. The 217th Rifle Division was tasked with supporting the army's strike force from the north and northeast.

The 7th Guards Cavalry Division[123] remained in the area of Matovo, Vnukovo, with the task of conducting reconnaissance in the northeast and north directions.

Thus, after January 5, the center of gravity of hostilities shifted to the left flank of the army, where its main grouping was formed, consisting of the 340th, 154th rifle divisions and the 112th tank brigade for operations in the direction of Yukhnov.

Aiming the troops of the 50th Army in the general direction of Yukhnov and subsequently to Vyazma, the front command set before it the task of deep coverage (in cooperation with the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, the 43rd and 49th armies) of the Medyn-Chondro-

Yukhnovskaya grouping of the enemy. With the defeat of the latter and the withdrawal of the left wing troops to Vyazma, a deep coverage was achieved in cooperation with the right wing of the front and the Kalinin Front of the enemy's central grouping in the area of Rzhev, Vyazma, Gzhatsk. By January 6, the front of our troops passed along the line east of Argunovo (15 km north of Kaluga), Domozhirovo, Krutitsa, Zheleztsovo, Troskino (claim.), Derminka (claim.), Eremino, east of Kudinovo, Cheremoshnya, then turned west and passed along lines Zubovo (claim.), Davydovo. On this line, our units met a strong defense of the Nazi troops. The enemy's 131st, 31st Infantry, 36th Motorized and 19th Panzer Divisions operated on this front. In

addition, the 50th Army had to deal with units of the 137th and 52nd Infantry Divisions, whose main forces were in front of the front of the

49th Army. By January 10, units of the 260th, 263rd and 213th (354th Infantry Regiment) enemy infantry divisions were fixed in the zone of operations of the 50th Army. During

January 7 and 8, the 50th Army launched an offensive on the entire front. The fascist German troops, having organized an all-round defense at a number of points, put up stubborn resistance. Only in certain areas did our troops manage to advance somewhat. On January 7, the 217th Rifle Division captured Koptev and Karmanov in battle. By the end of January 8, the division was counterattacked by enemy infantry units, supported by 18 tanks with a landing of submachine gunners from the area west of Karmanov. The attack was repulsed, and the division firmly held the occupied area. During the fighting after January 8, on the front of the 50th Army and the adjacent 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, the following operational situation developed: on the right flank, units of the 290th and 12th Guards Rifle Divisions, having thrown the enemy

back, by January 12 reached Verteba front (1 km south of Pyatovskaya), Karavay, Palaces.

Here both divisions again met the stubborn resistance of the enemy, especially in the area of Pyatovskaya, Frolovo, Zakharovo stations.

By decision of the army command, the 290th Rifle Division, having surrendered its sector to the 12th Guards Rifle Division, was supposed to move to the Kaluga region on the morning of January 14, from where it was transferred to the left flank of the army for an offensive in the direction of Yukhnov. 12th

Guards Rifle Division was reassigned to the 49th Army. Having strengthened the left flank of the 49th Army, it was supposed to act around the Linen Factory from the south and help the advance of the 50th Army on Yukhnov. Along with this, it was intended to put pressure on the Kondrov grouping of the Germans.

At the same time, the protracted battles for Yukhnov and the failed attempt by the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps to capture it on the move demanded that attention be focused on the task of capturing Yukhnov as quickly as possible. This was the essence of the regrouping of the main forces of the 50th Army to the left flank. The remaining divisions of the 50th Army by that time occupied the following position:

- The 413th Rifle Division, being turned to the west, was fighting in the area of Asenevo, Zheleztsovo against a group of Germans who were trying to break through to Uteshevo. The 7th Guards Cavalry Division also fought with this enemy group, which covered the Matovo-Vnukovo sector.
- The 217th Rifle

Division partly held the Troskino and Eremino fronts, while the main forces advanced to the Koptevo and Karmanovo areas. Developing a strike on Yukhnov, by January 11, the division reached the Varshavskoye highway in the Pushkino-Kotilovo sector, where it engaged in heavy battles with the enemy on the outskirts of both points.

- The 340th Rifle Division was advancing on Upryamovo and Kudinovo. Both points were strongly fortified by the enemy and adapted for all-round defense.
- The

154th Infantry Division continued a stubborn battle in the area of Derevyagino,

Zubovo.

- The 12th tank brigade, acting as a rifle unit, sought to capture Zubov. According to the report of the army commander, by January 7, the brigade had five T-26 tanks and one T-34 tank.

Holding the approaches to Yukhnov from the south and southeast, the Germans organized a circular defense of the area of Upryamovo, Kudinovo, Zubovo, Podpolevo, thoroughly fortifying the villages, which were turned into centers of resistance and

strongholds. The 1st Guards Cavalry Corps of General Belov, next to the left, after a series of unsuccessful attempts to capture Yukhnov from the front Zubovo, Davydovo, undertaken by him during the first days of January, from January 8 was turned to Mosalsk and carried out a new task of the front

part of the forces, in cooperation with the 10th Army, he was supposed to capture Mosalsk, after which the main forces, bypassing Mosalsk from the north, advance in a north-western direction, with the goal of attacking

Vyazma. On the night of January 9, the cavalry corps, in cooperation with the 325th rifle division of the 10th army, captured Mosalsk. After that, the 325th Rifle Division came under the command of the commander of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps. Subsequently, the 239th Rifle

division.

On January 10, units of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps were completing their regrouping and by the end of January 11, they occupied the following areas: 325th Rifle Division - Aleksino (4 km north of Mosalsk), Rodnya; 1st Guards Cavalry Division - Pyshkino, Koshelevo, Kolpinovo; 57th Cavalry Division - Terenkovo, Seliverstovo; 41st Cavalry Division - Efremovo, Burmakino; 2nd Guards Cavalry Division - Seleznevo, Poskon, Zyuzino; The 75th Cavalry Division (corps reserve) was located in the Mosalsk area, the 2nd Guards Tank Brigade [124] - in Kalintev (12 km southwest of Uteshev).

Having completed the regrouping and concentration in the area of the indicated points, the cavalry corps in the following days acted in a northwestern direction, with the task of intercepting the Warsaw highway and developing an attack on Vyazma.

As for the 50th Army, having regrouped its main forces from the right flank to the left, it concentrated its main efforts on the Yukhnov direction. The exit of the group of the commander of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps beyond the Warsaw highway to the west of Yukhnov and his subsequent advance to Vyazma could have covered the enemy grouping in the Yukhnov area. However, the subsequent military events did not unfold in

expected direction.

Since the morning of January 14, units of the 50th Army have been fighting on the entire front, especially stubborn in the Yukhnov direction and in the Troskino, Ryndino area, where the enemy grouping, consisting of separate units of the 52nd, 31st, 131st and 137th Infantry Divisions, tried to break through into direction to Uteshevo. According to the testimony of the prisoners, the attempt of the Germans

to break through to Uteshevo was intended to connect with units of the Yukhnov group in the Zubovo area. Through the joint efforts of the 413th Rifle and 7th Guards Cavalry Divisions, this enemy attempt was eliminated, and he was forced to retreat west through Khlestovo to Detkovo and further along the Ugra River. After that, the 7th Guards Cavalry Division was transferred to the left flank of the army. On the morning of January 14, the 217th Rifle Division was attacked by fresh enemy units with

forces of up to two infantry regiments on the front of Pushkino, Kotilovo and retreated behind the Sergievskoye, Ugolnitsa, Palatki line. The 340th and 154th Rifle Divisions and the 112th Tank Brigade fought the enemy, who firmly held

Upryamovo, Kudinovo, Shchelkanovo, Zubovo, Sosino, and Podpolevo. The 290th Rifle Division, having the task of concentrating in the area of Davydovo, Podolsh and operating in the Yukhnov

direction, was on the march, approaching Uteshevo, where the army headquarters had been located since January 7. The period of combat operations of the 50th Army in the Yukhnov direction, which began after January 15, was mainly

reduced to a slow offensive against the enemy, who was stubbornly defending on fortified lines. Just like the Kondrovo line, the Linen Plant, the strongholds here were well equipped in terms of engineering: there were wire fences, trenches, icy ramparts, and a flanking fire system. The offensive of the army was further complicated by strong blizzards and snowdrifts, as a result of which there were frequent cases of loss of communication between the army headquarters and divisions. By the end of January 18, the situation on the front of the 50th Army looked

So:

- The 413th Rifle Division fought against slowly retreating enemy units on the Vshivka-Troskino line. In the following days, the 413th Rifle Division was transferred to the left flank of the army and, together with the 290th Rifle and 7th Guards Cavalry Divisions, from January 22, advanced in the direction of Trufanovo, bypassing Yukhnov from the southwest.
- The 217th, 340th rifle divisions and the 112th

tank brigade unsuccessfully attacked the enemy three times during the day,

defending in Upryamovo, and retreated to their original position.

- The 154th Rifle Division, having been transferred to the front of Sosino, Davydovo, fought for Kuligi, Podpolevo. The Germans offered stubborn

resistance. • The 290th Rifle Division fought for Lipovka (1 km west of Davydov), Prudischi, and the 7th Guards Cavalry Division, covering the left flank of the army, advanced on Gulino (1 km southwest of Prudishchi), Lenskoye. As a

result, the front of the 50th Army took a broken line with a length of over 70 km, while the troops were scattered in different directions.

In connection with this situation, the front commander, General of the Army Zhukov, on January 19 ordered General Boldin to create a fist to strike at Podpolevo (south of Yukhnov) and, having mastered it, move the group to Yukhnov. Another group was ordered to aim from the northeast in the direction of Prechistoye, Yukhnov in order to pincer the enemy grouping holding the area of Upryamovo, Kudinovo, Zubovo, Podpolevo, and capture Yukhnov.

The subsequent actions of the 50th Army unfolded in the spirit of following the instructions of the front commander. By the end of the day on January 22, the 217th Infantry Division, blocking Upryamovo and other points, fought for Ploskoe and Trebushivki. The 340th Rifle Division, blocking Berezki, advanced on Ploskoye. The 154th Rifle Division, having captured Ostapova Sloboda (4 km east of Podpolev), developed a strike on Olkha. The 290th, 413th Rifle and 7th Guards Cavalry Divisions attacked in the general direction of Trufanovo.

Despite the energetic actions of our troops, enemy resistance continued to grow. By January 22, intelligence data established that up to 12 infantry regiments from the 31st, 131st, 137th, 213th, 52nd infantry and 19th tank divisions of the Germans were operating in front of the front of the 50th Army.

Under these conditions, the command of the 5th Army directed the main efforts to its left flank, where the main grouping of the army was concentrated, consisting of 344, [125]-290, 413, 173rd (after January 20 transferred from the 49th Army) and 340th th rifle divisions, which received the general task of striking around Yukhnov from the south and south-west.

By order of the army commander dated January 27, the troops of the 50th Army were assigned the following

tasks: The 217th Infantry Division with reinforcement units, pinning the enemy on the flanks, advanced in the direction of Trebushki, Yukhnov. The 154th Rifle Division, which occupied the front of Ostapov Sloboda (1 km northwest of Sosin), Tibeki (1 km east of Podpolev), was also aiming at Yukhnov. The divisions

that made up the main grouping of the army were to advance:

344th Infantry Division from the Davydovo area, Zhivulki in direction Mochalovo, Dolina.

The 290th Rifle Division from the Chernevo front (1 km north of Zhivulka), Gorokhovka in the direction of Labeki with the subsequent development of an attack on Shukleevo (west of

Yukhnov). The 413th Rifle Division, having blocked the enemy's strongholds - Gorokhovka, Sitskoye, with part of its forces, was supposed to go out on January 28 with the main forces to the area of \u200b\u200bMarino,

Voitovo, Krutoye (all points west of Yukhnov). The 173rd Infantry Division, which fought for Barsuki, received the task of blocking this point and continuing the offensive to the northwest, with the goal of reaching the area of Spornoye, Zhornovka, Semizho on January 28. The 7th Guards Cavalry Division, which covered the left flank of the army, was ordered

on January 28 to go to the area of Zhupanovo, Krasnoe, Khvoshchevka. The 340th Rifle Division, having transferred the Ploskoye area to the 112th Tank Brigade, hastily transferred to the left flank of the army and concentrated in the Lenskoye, Putogino, Kaplino area, from where it was supposed to advance behind the 173rd Rifle Division in the direction of Barsuka.

Having received fresh reinforcements, the enemy continued counterattacks. By the end of January 27, the Germans, up to an infantry regiment with artillery and mortars, pushed our units back and occupied Lazino, Dyatlovka, Karpovo (all points 1.5 km south of Bardeno near Warsaw highway). A stubborn battle took place on the front of the 173rd Infantry Division, which cut the Varshavskoye Highway in the Barsuka area and fought for this point. Prisoners were taken who belonged to the 19th Panzer D

Other divisions of the army had to fight no less heavy battles. As a result, by January 31, on the left flank, they managed to capture the Badgers and intercept the Varshavskoe highway in some places. On the right flank of the army, the offensive did not receive proper development. The struggle for Yukhnov continued in the subsequent period and resulted in fierce battles in this direction.[126]

On the front of the cavalry group of General Belov, adjacent to the left, the following events took place during the period under review: On January 14, the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps intercepted Varshavskoye Highway in the area of Lyudkovo, Solovyovka, aiming its cavalry divisions in a northwestern direction. On the right, the 325th Rifle Division, attached to the corps, defended the line of Aleksino, Vysokoye, Khotibino, Pyshkino, covering the fighting actions of the corps. The offensive of our cavalry took place in the face of strong enemy resistance and systematic raids by his aircraft. The cavalry units suffered heavy losses. Our aviation, due to the remoteness of airfields and snow drifts on some of them, was unable to provide sufficient effective support to the corps. Just as on the front of the 50th Army, the fighting of the

cavalry corps after it reached the Warsaw highway was reduced to protracted stubborn battles with the Nazi troops and continued until January 29. By this time, units of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, having broken the enemy's resistance on the Warsaw highway section (approximately from Glagolnya to Solovyovka), crossed it and further developed success in the northwestern and western directions.

The actions of the cavalry group of General Belov after it left the Warsaw highway proceeded as follows. Fulfilling the task of advancing to the Semlevo station area and connecting with Sokolov's cavalry corps (Kalinin Front), General Belov's group entered the Gremyacheye, Glukhovo, Vyazovets, Petrishchevo area on the afternoon of January 31, having advanced units on the Velikopolie, Subbotniki line.

During February 1, the cavalry group fought its way forward in the direction indicated to it. The offensive of our cavalry took place in the face of growing resistance from the German troops. Enemy aircraft also intensified their activity in the area.

During the 2nd and on the night of February 3, the troops of General Belov fought on the following lines: the 2nd Guards Cavalry Division advanced on Stogovo, and the 1st Guards Cavalry Division, having captured the villages of Pokrov and Svinenki (16 km southeast of the station Semlevo), developed a blow to Podrezovo. The 75th and 57th cavalry divisions drove the enemy out of Moloshino, Star. Kapustino (1.5 km south of Moloshino) and continued the battle for Mikhalevo (1 km north of Moloshino); The 41st Cavalry Division, occupying the front of Nikolskoye, Debrevo and to the west, covered the rear of the cavalry group.

The battle on the indicated sector of the front lasted until February 4. On the night of February 5, the troops of the cavalry group continued the offensive, having the task of capturing Vyazma in cooperation with the 33rd Army. Puzikovo (8 km south of Vyazma) and Stogovo were occupied by the Night Attack. During the day, parts of the cavalry group prepared a further offensive, which was scheduled for 18 hours on

February 5. During the night of February 6, the cavalry group, as a result of stubborn fighting on the entire front, moved forward somewhat. On the night of February 7, our cavalry managed to capture the villages of Pastikha, Mikhalki (1.5 km southeast of Pastikha) and reach the near approaches to Vyazma. The advancing units wedged into the enemy defenses.

The battles established the strengthening of the German defense near Vyazma with firepower and people. Enemy counterattacks intensified. Our troops fought them off with difficulty, inflicting significant losses on the Germans. On February 8, by 1300, units of the cavalry group occupied the area of Selivanovo, Pastikha, Zabchovo, Lunyaki.

The increased resistance of the Nazi troops in the Vyazma region, the increased activity of enemy aircraft and the difficulties of winter conditions forced our command to temporarily abandon the task of capturing Vyazma and turn the cavalry group of General Belov to a new direction. By February 11, a corresponding regrouping was carried out.

Subsequently, the troops of the cavalry group of General Belov acted in the Dorogobuzh direction, fulfilling the new task of the front.

At the front of the 50th Army, fierce battles continued at the Yukhnovsky bridgehead at

that time. As a result of the January offensive of the 50th Army and the 1st Cavalry Corps, in essence, it was possible to solve only one problem - access to the Varshavskoe highway with the subsequent advance of the cavalry to Vyazma. [127] Another task - the defeat of the Kondrovo-myatlyovo Yukhnov grouping of the enemy and the capture of Yukhnov - remained unfinished. The Germans managed to withdraw part of their forces from the blow of the 43rd, 49th, 50th armies and the 1st guards cavalry corps and thereby save them from

the final defeat. The reasons for this were the same as those we noted when drawing conclusions from the actions of the 49th Army. In the actions of the 50th Army and the 1st Cavalry Corps, it was positive that, despite the difficult conditions of the offensive, the enemy was ultimately knocked out of his positions and again began to retreat to the west, losing n

Combat operations on the front of the 10th Army with the aim of reaching the Vyazma-Bryansk railroad (January 5–31, 1942) to its

left flank, it was supposed to linger at the reached line for two or three days in order to align the front with the lagging 61st Army of the Bryansk Front. The command of the front, by a directive of January 5, categorically demanded to continue a decisive offensive in order to prevent the enemy from putting himself in

order, pulling up reserves and gaining a foothold. The army was to occupy Sukhinichi and Mosalsk as soon as possible and reach the Vyazma-Bryansk railroad. In accordance with the directive of the front, the commander of the 10th Army on the same day assigned the following tasks to the troops. • 325th Rifle Division to capture Mosalsk by the end of

January 5th. • The 239th Rifle Division to move to the area of Meshchovsk, with the intention of advancing on

Serpeisk in the future. • The 324th Rifle Division with two companies of the 239th

Rifle Division and one battalion of the 323rd Rifle Division was

left to block Sukhinichi.

- The 326th Rifle Division received the task on January 5 by 12 o'clock go to the area of Bordykino, Naumovo, Shlipovo.
- The 323rd Rifle Division was supposed to go to the area on January 5 Poles, Buda Monastery, Buda.
- The 322nd Infantry Division, covering the left flank of the army, was supposed to concentrate on January 5 in the area of Budskie Vyselki, Lashevo, Khotkovo, Klinty, with the task of attacking Zhizdra.
- The 328th Rifle Division until January 5 remained in the second echelon of the army in the Kozelsk area, from where it then advanced to the Mekhovoe area. The headquarters of the 10th Army was also located there.

According to intelligence, by January 10, the 296th, 56th and 216th infantry divisions, parts of the 19th tank and 10th motorized divisions of the Germans were operating in front of the front of the 10th army. Sukhinichi was defended by two infantry regiments of the 216th Infantry Division and one company of the 19th Panzer Division.[128] The headquarters of the 216th division was also located there.

In addition, Meshchovsk, Mosalsk and other points defended parts of other enemy divisions. In particular, the 406th regiment of the 213th infantry division and the 316th regiment of the 212th infantry division were in Meshchovsk and Mosalsk divisions.

From the tasks assigned to the troops of the 10th Army, it follows that the command of the army, aiming the bulk of its forces in the direction of Kirov, Lyudinovo, while simultaneously occupying Meshchovsk, Serpeisk, Mosalsk and Zhizdra, sought to secure its flanks. The need to master the first three points, in addition, arose from the general task of the front, which required a strong support for the rear of the 1st Guards Corps, aimed at Vyazma, and indirect support for the left flank of the 50th Army, which fought on the Yukhnov bridgehead. In addition, during the movement of the main forces of the 10th Army itself to the Kirovo,

Lyudinovo region, the abandonment of such defensive centers as Sukhinichi, Meshchovsk, Mosalsk, Serpeisk in its rear and on the flank could create a complication. Therefore, the rapid elimination of pockets of German resistance was required.

From what has been said, it is clear in what situation the 10th Army had to fight on a front up to 100 km wide. Under these conditions, great demands were placed on command and control of troops.

In addition, the winter, the insufficiently organized work of the rear, the increased activity of enemy aircraft and the fatigue of army units further complicated the situation in which military operations had to be conducted.

Offensive

10th Army deployed v the following sequence: the 239th and 324th rifle divisions fought in the Sukhinichi area from January 1 to 5 and completed the encirclement of this point.

By January 5, the 325th Rifle Division reached the front of Frolovskoye, Bedritsa and started a battle on the outskirts of Meshchovsk. Fully manned, the enemy's fresh 406th Infantry Regiment, also reinforced with tanks, artillery and mortars, offered stubborn resistance to our troops. Having broken the resistance of the Germans on the front of Bedritsa, Frolovskoye, units of the 325th Infantry Division approached the city, where they were again met with strong enemy counterattacks. The struggle on the outskirts of the city and inside it lasted about two days. On the morning of January 6, the division as a result

fierce street fighting occupied the city, part of the forces bypassing it. After that, the 325th Rifle Division developed an offensive against Mosalsk.

The 326th Rifle Division, overcoming the resistance of the 296th Infantry Division and other enemy units, reached the area of Azaryevo, Bordykino, Nemerzki by the morning of January 6, from where it continued to advance along the Sukhinichi railway, Spas Demensk (13 km north -west of Bakhmutov), having the task of reaching the Dabuzha, Sobolevka, Shibaevka station area by the end of January 6 and capturing these points. By January 5, the 239th Rifle Division

was removed from the blockade of Sukhinichi and thrown into Meshchovsk to attack it from the south in cooperation with the 325th Rifle Division. After capturing Meshchovsk, this division was to operate in the direction of Serpeisk. However, her participation in the capture of Meshchovsk was not required, and on January 6, from the area south of Meshchovsk, she was sent to Serpeisk. The 324th Rifle Division continued to block Sukhinichi.

South of Sukhinichi, in the direction of Kirov, the 330th Infantry Division was advancing, which had the task of reaching the Ryaplovo, Maklaki, Khludnev area by the end of the day on January 6. Units of the enemy's 216th Infantry Division retreated in front of the front of the 330th Infantry Division.

By the same time, the 323rd Rifle Division, having occupied the Duminichi station, reached the line of Buda Monastyrskaya, Poles, with the task of occupying the area of Sloboda, Kotovichi, Zimnitsy. In the area of Bryn, Dubrovka (4 km southwest of the Duminichi station), the division fought with the enemy, who had a reinforced battalion at each point. While holding Bryn and Dubrovka, the Germans set themselves the task of ensuring the direction to Lyudinovo, Zhizdra, Zikeevo. The 322nd Rifle Division, covering the left flank of

the 10th Army, reached the front of Kolosovo and Volosovo by the end of January 6, ready to advance by the morning of January 7 to the area of Solonovka, Zikeevo, Petrovka. However, this task turned out to be unbearable for the 322nd Infantry Division, it reached the indicated area only by the end of January 11 and began to encircle Zikeevo with part of its forces, where two enemy infantry battalions with a total strength of up to 1000 people were defending.

The 328th Rifle Division continued to remain in the second echelon of the army, in the area of Muzalevka, Zvyagino,

Yangshino. Thus, the 10th Army was advancing in four directions: on Mosalsk, Serpeisk, Kirov and Lyudinovo. The construction of the army took a fan-shaped form, the width of the front reached 150 km. Such a formation made great demands on the 10th Army in organizing command and control and communications with divisions scattered along a wide front. In addition, the entire 324th Rifle Division was diverted to blocking Sukhinichi; to help, she had to keep the only reserve of the army in this direction - the weak 328th rifle division.

In the afternoon of January 7, units of the 10th Army developed the offensive in the indicated directions with the task of reaching the Mosalsk, Ploty, Spasskoye, Novoe Selo, Bol. front by the end of January 8. Fence, Ignatovka.

On the afternoon of January 7, the 239th Rifle Division occupied Serpeisk and continued the offensive in a northwestern direction. A fierce battle continued near Sukhinichi with encircled units of the 216th Infantry and 19th Tank Divisions. The Sukhinichi garrison refused the offer to surrender, opening fire on the envoys of the 10th Army. On the afternoon of January 8,

units of the 324th Infantry Division went on the attack in one of the sectors in the Sukhinichi area. They occupied several buildings on the southern and southwestern outskirts of the city, but were stopped by heavy enemy fire from stone houses adapted for defense. On the night of

January 9, the 325th Rifle Division, in cooperation with the left-flank units of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, occupied Mosalsk, after which it was subordinated to the commander of the cavalry corps.

The remaining divisions of the 10th Army, having completed the task set by the command, by the end of January 8, reached the Spasskoe, Bol. Zaborye, Ignatovka and developed the offensive in the general direction of Kirov, Lyudinovo and Zhizdra.

By the end of January 2, the 323rd Rifle Division occupied Lyudinovo and fought a stubborn battle to the west of it all day on January 10. One rifle regiment was sent to Kirov to support the advancing

him the 330th Infantry Division. The offensive of the units of the 10th Army took place in conditions of heavy snowfall and in some places blizzards, which slowed down the advance.

The enemy, offering resistance, retreated in the following directions: along the Sukhinichi-Spas-Demensk road - the remnants of the 171st and 234th regiments of the 56th Infantry Division and the 10th Motorized Infantry Division; along the Sukhinichi-Kirov road - part of the 296th Infantry Division. West of Lyudinovo, the presence of the SS regiment "Grossdeutschland"

was noted. Parts of the 10th Army, continuing the offensive, after January 10 reached the line of the Uzhat River, the city of Kirov, Lyudinovo and fought on the outskirts of Zhizdra. In the morning of January 11, the 330th

Rifle Division captured Kirov with a fight. On the left flank of the army, in the area of Zhizdra, Zikeevo, after January 11, the situation began to change dramatically. The success of the offensive of the 10th Army, which captured the troops of the right flank and center of Kirov and Lyudinovo, caused serious countermeasures on the part of the enemy. This was also

prompted by his desire to withdraw the Sukhinich group from the encirclement. The German command hastily transferred from Bryansk to the Zhizdra region the fresh 208th Infantry Division with ski battalions, which had arrived on the Russian front from France shortly before. On January 20, the fresh 211th Infantry Division, which had also been transferred from France, was brought up from Smolensk to the Lyudinovo area on January 20. To the south of Zikeevo, along the Sukhinichi-Bryansk railway, motorized regiments of the 4th Panzer Division, reinforced by 10-12 tanks, were concentrated. The German command set the task for all these troops - to strike at the left wing of the Western Front and clear the Vyazma-Bryansk railway. The enemy's 208th infantry division was to break through to Sukhinichi and release their garrison with the support of the motorized regiments of the 4th Panzer Division, part of the forces operating in the direction of Zikeevo and at the same time having the task of delaying the advance of the 61st Army of the Bryansk Front. The latter still lagged

behind and thus put the left wing of the Western Front in a difficult position. By the directive of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command, the 61

on his left wing. On

January 12, the German offensive began against the left flank of the 10th Army, accompanied by intense raids by the Nazis. aviation.

The 322nd Rifle Division, having lifted the blockade of Zikeev, withdrew under the onslaught of the enemy to the north and northeast of it, to the Ilyushenka-Petrovka line. On the right flank and in the center of the 10th Army, our offensive continued. The 239th Rifle Division fought in the Kirsanovo, Pyatnitsa, Shershnevo, Krasny Kholm area, developing a strike in the direction of the Chiplyaevo station (8 km northwest of Bakhmutov). From January 16, this division was subordinate to the commander of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps.

The 326th Rifle Division, having cut the railroad, was fighting at the Borets, Bykovo, Degonka line. The 330th Rifle Division was in the Kirov area, advancing to the north of it, along the railway. The 323rd Rifle Division operated in the Lyudinov area. On the night of January 16, the division, leaving one regiment in Lyudinovo; the rest of the forces marched in the direction of Zhizdra. Together with the 322nd Rifle Division, she was to destroy the enemy's Zikeyevo-Zhizdra grouping and capture Zhizdra. The 324th Rifle Division continued to block Sukhinichi. The 328th division still remained in the reserve of the army commander.

Fighting in the area of Zhizdra and Zikeev continued with unrelenting tension after January 13–14. The Zhizdrinsky-Zikeevskaya group of Germans[129] continued to stubbornly break through in the direction of Sukhinichi. On January 18, the offensive of enemy units began in the

Lyudinov area, and on January 19, German troops went on the offensive on the right flank of the 10th Army, striking from the Bakhmutovo area in the direction of the Baryatinsky station, along the Spas Demensk-Sukhinichi railway. The fighting on the front of the 61st Army, after its inclusion in the Western Front, unfolded as follows. Until January 16, the

army was regrouping, acting against the Bolkhov group of Nazi troops, which consisted of the 112th, 167th infantry divisions and separate units of the 56th (one regiment) and 208th infantry divisions. The essence of this rearrangement was

the fact that the right-flank divisions of the army (91st cavalry, 350th and 387th rifle divisions) changed the direction of their offensive from the western and southwestern to the southeastern. Previously, it was necessary, in cooperation with the center and the right flank of the army, to deal with the Bolkhov grouping of the enemy, whose overhang over the extreme left wing of the front made it impossible for him to develop a blow in a westerly direction, hampered the actions of the troops of the right wing of the Bryansk Front and left open the left flank of the 61 Army.

The right-flank divisions, advancing in a southeasterly direction, reached the following front on the afternoon of January 20: the 91st Cavalry Division captured Ivanovo by 11 p.m. on January 20 and continued to fight south and southeast of it; The 350th Rifle Division took Yagodnaya in battle and developed the offensive in a southeasterly direction; The 387th Rifle Division, overcoming enemy resistance, went to the front of Nogai, Kireykovo, having captured both points. Parts of the center

and left flank of the 61st Army fought defensive battles: the 346th Rifle Division on the Marovka-Veyno line; 342nd Rifle Division - Veino, Dolbino, Fatyanovo (south of Belev); 356th Rifle Division - on the Oka River from Budgovishche to Chergodaevo.

By January 20, the following situation had arisen on the front of the 10th Army: in the center of the army, they continued to firmly hold the Kirov region, and on the flanks they were subjected to strong enemy pressure, and its largest grouping was advancing against the left flank of the army, from the area of Lyudinovo, Zhizdra, Zikeevo.

Despite the stubborn resistance of the 322nd Infantry Division, the latter, under the onslaught of a numerically superior enemy, was forced to withdraw from the Zikeev area to the northeast and on January 20 concentrated in the Rechitsa, Khotkovo, Chernyshino area. After a stubborn battle, the 323rd Rifle Division left Lyudinovo and withdrew to the area of Shipilovka, Usovka, Ignatovka. The rest of the 10th Army fought on the same lines.

As a result, the fascist German units managed to break through on the left flank and reach the Duminici area by January 22, from where they were driven out by the ski battalion of the 328th Infantry Division. Having received fresh reinforcements, on January 23, the Nazi troops again occupied the Duminichi station and reached the line of the Duminichi station, Vertnoe.